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PRELIMINARY HISTORY OF THE ARMISTICE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The world has long been in possession of the outward causes of the Great War and of the ostensible reasons which brought it to a close within a twelfth-month of the cessation of hostilities. This knowledge is based upon the most authentic of official documents: the treaty of Versailles, to which the direct or indirect participants in the war put their hands and seals on June 28, 1919, and the *Preliminary History of the Armistice* (*Vorgeschichte des Waffenstillstandes*) issued by the Republican Government of Germany in the course of that year.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed in the Palace of Versailles on June 28, 1919, in the very room where the German Empire had been proclaimed on January 18, 1871, by a victorious Germany. It bears the signatures of the plenipotentiaries of twenty-seven Allied and Associated Powers, on the one hand, and, on the other, those of Germany "acting in the name of the German Empire and of each and every component State." According to its preamble, the catastrophe "originated in the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary on July 28, 1914, against Serbia, the declaration of war by Germany against Russia on August 1, 1914, and against France on August 3, 1914, and in the invasion of Belgium." The reason for the treaty, as given in the preamble, was that the war which thus *originated* "should be replaced by a firm, just and durable peace." And, since the peace was preceded by a formal cessation of hostilities, as is usual in the case of treaties putting an end to war, the preamble also states that "on the request of the Imperial German Government an armistice was granted on November 11, 1918, to Germany by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers in order that a treaty of peace might be concluded with her." We thus have in authentic form and in a few lines the whole miserable story.

The *Vorgeschichte des Waffenstillstandes*, which is here reproduced in English under the title of the *Preliminary History of the Armistice*, was issued by the *post-bellum* Government of Germany. It is a collection of official German documents giving the various reasons which caused Germany to request an armistice from the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, of which the United States was the last but by no means the least influential in causing the request and in rendering it effective.

The preface to the original German volume analyzes the contents of the documents so minutely as to make unnecessary further comment along that line—an undertaking which would be both difficult and dangerous, since the personal equation has a way of obtruding itself even when one is on guard

OFFICIAL POSITIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE DOCUMENTS

ADLER, DR. VICTOR.....	Austrian Councilor of State.
ARZ VON STRAUSSENBERG, GENERAL.....	Austrian Chief of Staff.
BALLIN, MR. ALBERT.....	Manager of the Hamburg-American Line.
BARTENWERFFER, VON.....	General in the German Army.
BAUER.....	German Secretary of State for the Labor Office.
BERCKHEIM.....	German Secretary of Legation.
BERG, VON.....	Chief of the German Civil Cabinet.
BESELER, VON.....	General in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.
BÖTTICHER, VON.....	Major in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.
BRINCKMANN.....	Major in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.
BROCKDORFF-RANTZAU, COUNT.....	German Minister at Copenhagen.
BURIAN, BARON.....	Austro-Hungarian Privy Councilor.
BUSSCHE, BARON VON DEM.....	German Under-Secretary of State.
CLEMENCEAU, GEORGES.....	Prime Minister of France.
COLORADO, COUNT.....	Chief of Austro-Hungarian Cabinet.
CRAMON, VON.....	General in the German Army.
CZERNIN, COUNT OTTOKAR.....	Former Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
DEUSTERBERG.....	Major in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.
DEUTELMOSER.....	German Ministerial Director.
DREWS, DR.....	German Secretary of State.
EBERT.....	German Socialist leader.
EDEN, NILS.....	Swedish Premier.
ERBACH, PRINCE.....	Counselor at German Embassy, Vienna.
ERZBERGER.....	German Secretary of State; Chairman of German Armistice Commission.
FALKENHAYN, VON.....	General in the German Army; former Chief of the General Staff.
FERDINAND.....	King of Bulgaria.
FOCH, FERDINAND.....	Field Marshal of France; Commander in Chief of the Allied Armies in France.

FRIEDBERG.....	Vice President of Prussian State Ministry; representative of the National Liberal Party.
GALLWITZ, VON.....	General in the German Army.
GANTSCHOFF.....	General in the Bulgarian Army.
GÖPPERT.....	German Under-Secretary of State.
GROEBER.....	German Secretary of State.
GRÖNER.....	Lieutenant General in the German Army.
GRÜNAU, BARON VON.....	German Counselor of Legation at Foreign Office.
GUNDELL, VON.....	General in the German Army.
HAFTEN, LIEUTENANT COLONEL.....	Representative of the Supreme Army Command at the Foreign Office.
HAIG, FIELD MARSHAL EARL.....	Commander in Chief of the British Forces in France.
HANIEL.....	German Under-Secretary of State.
HARBOU, VON.....	Major in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.
HATZFELD, PRINCE.....	German Privy Councilor.
HAUSSMANN.....	German Secretary of State.
HECKSCHER, SIEGFRIED.....	Director of the Hamburg-American Line.
HEINRICHS.....	German Privy Councilor.
HERTLING, COUNT GEORG VON.....	German Imperial Chancellor, November 1, 1917 to September 28, 1918.
HEYER, COLONEL.....	Colonel in the German Army.
HINDENBURG, VON.....	General Field Marshal of the German Army; Chief of the General Staff.
HINTZE, VON.....	German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
HOFFMANN, GENERAL.....	Commander of German Army Corps in France.
HOHENLOHE-LANGENBURG, PRINCE ERNST.....	German diplomat at Berne.
HOHENLOHE-SCHILLINGSFÜRST, PRINCE GOTTFRIED ZU.....	Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Berlin.
HORN, VON.....	Captain on the Admiralty Staff.
HORSTMANN.....	German Counselor of Legation.
JORDAN, DR.....	Secretary of Legation at Berlin Foreign Office.
KAEMPF, DR.....	President of the Reichstag.
KARL I.....	Emperor of Austria.
KLEPSCH, FIELD MARSHAL BARON.....	Austro-Hungarian Military Plenipotentiary in Germany; Austro-Hungarian Member of Armistice Commission.
KRAUSE, DR. VON.....	German Secretary of State.
KRIEBEL.....	Major in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.

KUHL.....	Officer in the German Army.
LANCKEN.....	German Minister at Brussels.
LANSING, ROBERT.....	Secretary of State of the United States.
LERCHENFELD, COUNT.....	Bavarian Minister in Berlin.
LERSNER.....	Imperial Counselor of Legation.
LEWALD.....	German Under-Secretary of State.
LIAPTSCHEFF.....	General in the Bulgarian Army.
LICHNOWSKY, PRINCE.....	German Ambassador at London.
LYDD GEORGE.....	British Prime Minister.
LOSSBERG.....	Officer in the German Army.
LUCIUS.....	German Minister at Stockholm.
LUDENDORFF, VON.....	First Quartermaster General in the German Army.
MALTZAN.....	German Counselor of Embassy at The Hague.
MANN, VON.....	Secretary of State for Imperial Naval Office.
MARSCHALL, BARON VON.....	Chief of the German Military Cabinet.
MASSOW, GENERAL VON.....	German Military Plenipotentiary at Sofia.
MAX OF BADEN, PRINCE.....	German Imperial Chancellor from October 2 to November 10, 1918.
MUDRA, VON.....	General in the German Army.
MUMM, VON.....	Representative of Foreign Office in the Ukraine.
NADOLNY.....	German Privy Councilor.
OBERNDORFF, COUNT.....	German Plenipotentiary at Sofia; Member of German Armistice Commission.
PAYER, FRIEDRICH VON.....	German Vice Chancellor.
PERSHING, GENERAL JOHN.....	Commander in Chief of American Forces in France.
PFLANZER-BALTIN, VON.....	General in the Austrian Army.
PLESSSEN, VON.....	Adjutant General in the German Army.
RADOSLAVOFF, M.....	Bulgarian Premier.
RADOWITZ.....	German Under-Secretary of State.
RATHENAU, WALTHER.....	German industrial leader; Adviser at the Prussian War Office.
RENNENKAMPF, VON.....	Russian General in command of Russian forces in East Prussia.
RIESSER.....	Representative of National Liberal Party in the Reichstag.
RIFAAT PASHA.....	Turkish Minister of State.
ROEDERN, COUNT.....	German Secretary of State for the Imperial Treasury.

ROMBERG.	German Minister at Berne.
ROOSEVELT, THEODORE.	Former President of the United States.
ROSEN, DR.	German Minister at The Hague.
RÜDLIN.	German Secretary of State.
RUPPRECHT.	Crown Prince of Bavaria.
SAWOW, GENERAL MICHEL.	General in the Bulgarian Army.
SCHEER, REINHOLD VON.	Chief of German Admiralty Staff.
SCHEIDEMANN.	German Secretary of State.
SCHEÜCH, GENERAL.	German Minister of War.
SCHLIEBEN, VON.	German Privy Councilor.
SCHOLTZ, VON.	General in the German Army.
SCHULENBERG.	Officer in the German Army.
SIMONS.	German Privy Councilor.
SOLF.	German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
STEIN, BARON VON.	German Secretary of State.
STRESEMANN.	Delegate of National Liberal Party in Reichstag.
STUMM, VON.	German Under-Secretary of State; Chief of the Political Department of the German Foreign Office.
TALAAAT BEY.	Turkish Grand Vizier and Minister of the Interior.
TISZA, COUNT STEPHEN.	Former Hungarian Premier.
TREUTLER.	Imperial German Minister at Munich.
TRIMBORN.	German Secretary of State.
TROTHA, VON.	Admiral in German Navy.
VANSELOW, CAPTAIN.	German Naval Officer; Member, German Armistice Commission.
WAHNSCHAFTE.	German Under-Secretary of State.
WALDBURG.	Imperial Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople.
WALDOW, VON.	Secretary of State for War Food Administration.
WEDEL, COUNT VON.	German Ambassador at Vienna.
WEKERLE, DR.	Hungarian Prime Minister.
WILLIAM.	German Crown Prince.
WILLIAM II.	German Emperor.
WILLISEN, BARON VON.	Lieutenant General in German Army.
WILSON, WOODROW.	President of the United States of America.
WINTERFELD, VON.	Colonel in the German Army; Member, German Armistice Commission.
WRISBERG, VON.	General in the German Army.
ZEKI PASHA.	Turkish Member on Armistice Commission.

PRELIMINARY HISTORY
OF THE ARMISTICE

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PREFACE

The documents printed herein cover the period between August 14 and November 11, 1918. They consist of the conferences and the deliberations that took place between the Government and the Supreme Army Command, after the latter had come to the conclusion, owing to the military reverses of July and August, 1918, that despite the tremendous achievements of our Armies, it was no longer possible by means of a victory to force a peace with the enemy.

The publication of these documents was necessary to refute the spreading of false reports. Many forces are employed in distorting the truth. In some cases, they can no longer be credited with good faith; yet ignorance is in part the cause of some of these misrepresentations of fact. It is therefore necessary to throw complete light on the discussions which took place during this period. The people want the truth, and everyone concerned has a right to it.

The documents published are taken from the archives of the Foreign Office and from the Imperial Chancelry. They are contributions to the history of the origin of the peace proposal of October 3, and of the armistice agreement of November 11, 1918. They also contribute toward an understanding of the German revolution and of the utter simplicity of its victory.

These documents should facilitate the formation of an impartial judgment concerning the discussions between the Supreme Army Command and the political leaders of the nation during the closing stages of the war. Therefore all representations made to the political leaders by the Supreme Army Command which are contained in the documents referred to, have been included. In so far as possible the material is arranged chronologically. A few documents relating to the cessation of the U-Boat warfare are collected in a special section. For a clearer understanding of the situation the notes exchanged with President Wilson are inserted.

In a general way this collection outlines the development of events as follows:

The starting point of the whole peace proceeding was the Imperial conference at Spa on August 14, 1918 (Nos. 1 and 2). Although General Ludendorff had stated positively as late as the middle of July, 1918, that the offensive then in progress would result in a decisive defeat of the enemy (No. 2), it was now agreed that it was no longer possible to win the war by military action, and, therefore, an understanding with the enemy, by means of neutral mediation must be considered. But the immediate opening of negotiations for this purpose was not deemed necessary. On the contrary,

the Emperor's decision was to the effect that "*We must prepare to seek the opportune moment for coming to an understanding with the enemy*" (No. 1), and it was thus that the Imperial Chancellor summed up the conclusions of the conference: "Diplomatic feelers must be thrown out at an opportune moment preparatory to an understanding with the enemy. Such a moment might present itself *after the next successes in the west.*" In addition General Field Marshal von Hindenburg expressed the opinion, "*that it would be possible to remain fixed on French territory, and thereby in the end enforce our will upon the enemy.*"

It was in accord with the conclusions of this conference that Imperial Chancellor von Hertling rejected an immediate proposal for peace at the session of the Prussian Ministry of State on September 3, 1918 (No. 3), and that the more far-reaching desire of Austria for a direct appeal to all belligerent nations failed to meet approval (No. 4). The German view that neutral mediation was preferable, and that even for this a more opportune moment should be awaited—the moment, that is to say, when the German front had been consolidated—was presented to the Austrians on numerous occasions up to the 10th of September in order to restrain them from making their appeal public.

Only on the 10th of September did this view undergo a partial alteration. General Field Marshal von Hindenburg still voiced his opposition to an appeal to all the belligerent nations, but stated that he now "agreed to the mediation of a neutral Power for the purpose of bringing about a parley *without delay.*" The objection of Austria, who held fast to her own proposal and disapproved of neutral mediation, led to further negotiations with Austria (No. 4). When the Austrians, despite the German objections, sent forth their appeal, the scornful rejection of which was foreseen, Germany determined to seek concurrent neutral mediation (No. 5). The attempt did not meet with the desired result.

In the meantime, the collapse of Bulgaria rendered the situation materially more acute (Nos. 6 to 10).

On the 21st of September the idea of a direct approach to America upon the subject of inaugurating peace negotiations was first set forth. Preparations were made (Nos. 11, 12). On the 29th and the 30th of September, Secretary of State von Hintze was again at General Headquarters. The result of the conferences is shown by von Hintze's telegram of September 29, 9.40 p.m., to his office in Berlin (No. 13):

On the strength of His Majesty's command and the agreement of the Imperial Chancellor at Vienna, kindly inform Constantinople confidentially that I propose to suggest peace to President Wilson on the basis of his fourteen points, and to invite him to call a peace conference at Washington, at the same time asking for an immediate cessation of hostilities. . . .

If our allies agree, the new Imperial Government now in process of formation, will cause the proposal to be laid before President Wilson in such a way as to make it appear that the proposal emanated from itself.

Telegrams were sent from Berlin to Vienna and Constantinople on that very same evening (No. 14). Agreement with Vienna was reached after counter-inquiries (Nos. 16, 19), and the technical details of the secret transmission of the offer through Switzerland were arranged with Berne (Nos. 18, 20).

During these days the proceedings entered upon a new stage. While the Supreme Army Command had originally flatly objected to the inauguration of any steps toward peace before a consolidation of the military situation had been effected, and had subsequently advised caution, it now began to beg most insistently that the peace proposals be sent out *at once, on account of the acute danger of the military situation.* On the 1st of October a whole series of telegrams and telephone messages, all on the same subject, arrived at Berlin from General Headquarters. "Today the troops are holding their own; what may happen tomorrow cannot be foreseen" (No. 21). The peace proposals "*should be issued at once, and not be held back until the formation of the new government, which might be deferred.*" Today the Army is still holding its own and we are in a respectable situation, but the line *might be broken at any moment,* and then our proposal would come at the most unfavorable time" (No. 23). And late in the evening: "General Ludendorff stated to me that our proposal should be issued at once from Berne to Washington. *The Army could not wait forty-eight hours,* . . . the General said emphatically *that everything depended on the offer being in the hands of the Entente by Wednesday night or early Thursday morning at the latest,* and begs Your Excellency to leave no stone unturned to that end" (No. 27). On the same afternoon von Hindenburg sent word to Vice Chancellor von Payer (No. 22; cf. von Payer's report in No. 42) that if by seven or eight o'clock that evening it was certain that Prince Max was going to form a government, *it would be possible to wait until the next morning;* but if, on the other hand, the formation of the government was in any way doubtful, he considered the issuance of the statement as imperative *that very night.* In a statement delivered on the morning of October 2, before the party leaders of the Reichstag by the representative of the Supreme Army Command, the critical situation was sharply emphasized even in this more public circle (No. 28).

Prince Max most strenuously opposed the required peace move, as, in such a form and at the moment of such an embarrassing military situation, it would plainly have a most unfavorable effect on Germany's position in peace negotiations. He made the following statement on this subject on October 11 (No. 42):

On the evening of the 1st of October he was offered the post of Imperial Chancellor and simultaneously requested to seek at once the peace mediation of Wilson; he objected to this and wished to wait at least a week, in order to consolidate the new government and not to create the impression that we were making our plea for peace mediation under the pressure of a military collapse.

On the 2d of October, General Ludendorff requested a draft of the note (No. 29), and in the afternoon had a draft of his own telephoned, which was in substantial agreement with the final text (No. 30).

The Prince clung to his objections. As late as the 3d of October he submitted in writing a series of preliminary questions, among them the following (No. 32):

Does the Supreme Army Command realize that the inauguration of a peace move under the pressure of a critical military situation might result in the loss of German colonies and of German territory, such as Alsace-Lorraine and the purely Polish districts of the Eastern Provinces? (No. 32, par. 4).

On the same day Hindenburg, who was present in Berlin, sent to the Imperial Chancellor once more the statement in writing that "the Supreme Army Command persists in its demand for the immediate dispatch of the peace proposal" (No. 33).

After an exhaustive discussion between the Secretaries of State, the note, under this pressure from the Supreme Army Command, was sent out during the night of October 3/4 (No. 34).

During the time which elapsed before the arrival of the answer, the Imperial Chancellor again stated on October 6, according to the protocol at hand: "I fought against the note, first, because I felt the time to be premature; secondly, because I wished to turn to the enemy in general. Now we must quietly consider the consequences. Now the . . . situation at the front must be determined, and that through experienced officers, . . . the leaders of the Army must be heard" (No. 35). The Secretaries of State expressed the same opinion. The belief was obvious that, as the result of his nervous breakdown Ludendorff might have wrongly estimated the military situation. Thereupon arose a curious difficulty, which dragged itself through the whole of the important discussions which continued from the 6th to the 26th of October: *General Ludendorff saw in the consultations with other generals a lack of confidence in himself, and, under such circumstances, his resignation was threatened*, a contingency which the administration feared would precipitate the collapse (Nos. 35, 38, 39, 54 and especially 55, 62, 82).

Rathenau's plan of a *levée en masse*, publicly advocated in the *Vossische Zeitung*, was discussed, but dropped because the military authorities, particularly Ludendorff himself, considered nothing would be gained thereby. (No. 36, par. 7, Nos. 38 and 43, question 7).

Wilson's answer was dated October 5. It demanded a closer adherence to the President's points so that at the opening of a discussion, an arrangement could be found for the practical details of their application. Further, the evacuation of territory occupied by Germany was demanded, and, thirdly, a question was put as to the authorities in control in Germany (No. 37).

On October 9, an oral communication with Ludendorff took place, in which he briefly reviewed the entire history of the war (No. 38). At this interview Colonel Heye again declared that: "It will be gambling with fate on the part of the Supreme Army Command, if it does not press forward the peace move; we may be able to hold out until spring, *but a turn for the worse may come any day. Yesterday the question of a break through our lines hung on a thread.* . . . The troops no longer have any rest. It is impossible to foresee whether the troops will hold out or not. There are new surprises every day. I do not fear a catastrophe, but I want to save the Army, so that we can use it as a means of pressure during the peace negotiations."

This last idea was repeatedly brought up by the Supreme Army Command. Ludendorff adopted the point of view that Germany would not be compelled to accept every demand, and in particular that a possible demand for the surrender of German fortresses need not be complied with (Nos. 38, 43). But the replies to the question as to how long opposition could be carried on, were variable and uncertain. Ludendorff answered the question of Secretary of State Dr. Solf as to whether the front could still be held for three months, in the negative (No. 43), and to Prince Max's question: "Can we carry on the war alone, despite the defection of one of the two allies yet remaining to us, in case of the failure of the present peace move?" (No. 36), Ludendorff's answer was strongly conditional: "If a pause in the fighting on the western front should occur, yes" (No. 43).

The German reply to Wilson's answer was sent in complete agreement with the Supreme Army Command (Nos. 44, 46, 47). Upon the desire of General Field Marshal von Hindenburg, it was distinctly declared that Germany was proceeding on the assumption that the Powers associated with the United States would also uphold the principles of President Wilson (No. 44).

President Wilson's second note of October 15¹ (No. 48), was materially more severe. For the first time it treated a peace as separate from the armistice, the conditions of which were to be left "to the judgment and advice of the military advisers"; it spoke of the illegal and inhuman practices of the German armed forces, and stated that the accomplishment of a peace would wholly "depend upon the definiteness and the satisfactory character of the guaranties" which could be given as to the fundamental question relating to internal authority. Austria received a separate reply. The consternation caused all over Germany by this note, and especially its

¹ [Dated October 14, 1918.]

effect on the Army, were obviously very great. Opposition was aroused everywhere, pride was touched, and the Supreme Army Command wanted to retract. The only difficult question was whether or not such retraction was possible; for the revelation of the gravity of the situation, after four years of asserting the certainty of victory, had in the meantime had its effect both abroad and at home.

The relations between the Supreme Army Command and the Government were now reversed. The Supreme Army Command wanted to know whether the mass of the German people would once more go into a struggle to the bitter end, or whether its power of moral resistance had been too completely exhausted to do so (No. 54). Secretary of State Dr. Solf saw in this communication not only an appeal to the German people, but also a shifting of responsibility.

Why is public feeling so depressed? Because the military power has collapsed. But now it should be said that the military power will collapse if the popular spirit can not be upheld. This evasion of responsibility can not be permitted; it corresponds poorly with the words of General Ludendorff himself, who agreed with the Minister of War that a *levée en masse* was not possible.

On the 17th of October three sessions were held (Nos. 55 to 58). There exists an exhaustive report of the second session, at which Ludendorff appeared, and in which the whole situation was discussed in every phase (No. 57). Ludendorff expressed himself as more hopeful than he had been two weeks before regarding the possibility of standing firm for the next few weeks. But his assertions were indefinite, variable and colored by his prejudices. In view of the gravity of the facts discussed they did not inspire complete confidence. Though but a short time before both Ludendorff and Heye had described as a gamble with fate any failure to hasten the peace move (Nos. 23 and 38), it was now declared that:

War is no example in arithmetic. War is full of probabilities and improbabilities. No one knows what will eventually happen. When we reached East Prussia in August, 1914, and, with the help of my loyal colleague Hoffmann, the orders for the battle of Tannenberg were issued, nobody knew what would happen, whether *Rennenkampf* would march or not. He did not march, and the battle was won. *Soldier's luck* is a part of war; perhaps Germany will have some soldier's luck again.

To the comprehensive question, whether or not the western front could be held for three months in the event troops were transferred there from the eastern front—which was still doubtful—Ludendorff replied:

I have already told the Imperial Chancellor that I considered a break through the line possible, but not probable. I really do not consider a break probable. If you ask me my conscientious opinion, I can only answer: I do not fear it.

With regard to his earlier statements Ludendorff added: "The position is the same today; the line may be broken and we may be defeated any day. The day before yesterday things went well; they may equally well go badly for us."

The possibility of supplementing the troops in the west by the evacuation of White Russia and the Ukraine was thoroughly discussed and also, the holding out of materials and supplies, especially of oil, of which there was only enough to last for a few months. Many unfavorable factors were discovered. The number of men who could be obtained from the interior of the country by means of the finest combing out was calculated. At the conclusion of these calculations the Imperial Chancellor said:

So by next spring we can supply 600,000 to 700,000 men as reinforcements; the enemy 1,100,000 men, if I count only the Americans; and perhaps the Italians may be added to these. Will our situation thus become better or worse by spring?

General Ludendorff replied:

According to the figures it will be no worse. But we must further consider the reaction of the evacuation on our economic situation. If we retire, the condition of our war industries will be impaired to the greatest degree. It could always be foreseen that, if we come out of the war with our present boundaries, we shall be in a far worse military-political and industrial position than we were before. An evacuation now would show the same results.

At the close of the session, the Imperial Chancellor's train of thought was clearly seen. He pointed out that according even to Ludendorff's most sanguine hopes—hopes not shared by the Prince himself, apparently—the war could be continued only for a limited time; that in the meantime the defection of the only two remaining allies had to be reckoned with, and that now the question arose: *Whether at the finish we would be in a better or a worse position than at present?* Ludendorff was of the opinion that no worse conditions could be offered.

LUDENDORFF: I am under the impression that before accepting the conditions of this note, which are too severe, we should say to the enemy: Win such terms by fighting for them.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: And when they have won them, will they not impose worse conditions?

LUDENDORFF: There can be no worse conditions.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Oh, yes, they can invade Germany and lay waste the country.

LUDENDORFF: Things have not gone that far, yet.

This last statement was an evasion, for the possibility of resistance was at least uncertain, even according to Ludendorff's views at the time, and the problem was really how the political situation would last after further

useless resistance. Clearly the administration had to face three considerations. First, that in case of a capitulation the political situation might become worse. It was true that President Wilson's last note held out severe and humiliating armistice conditions. But as far as the actual peace treaty was concerned this note also adhered to the President's well-known points. If it should actually prove possible to carry on the war for a few months more we would, in case of an unsuccessful outcome, no longer have this ground under our feet. And then there was a second consideration. The fear already existed, especially in view of the tone of the last note, that Wilson might later violate his principles, or permit them to be violated. But as the note itself did not contain any plain violation of them, no definite breach of faith could be pointed out in the case of the breaking off of negotiations. Therefore, in the opinion of the administration, a summons to a battle to the death, even if the determination to send it out should be reached, would have been of no permanent advantage. The demands for the evacuation of territory and for the cessation of the U-Boat war, the general demands for democratization, in spite of the hardships entailed, were, in the opinion of the Imperial Chancellor, still insufficient reasons to inspire the German people, the majority of whom themselves wanted a more or less complete democracy, to carry on a frightful battle for any length of time—especially after negotiations for a Wilsonian peace had once been opened. There were in the third place further general considerations. Misery and death would certainly continue to rage frightfully in a war which, according to the present view even of Ludendorff, offered very little prospect of success. The number of miserable men severely wounded in the war, would only be needlessly increased. The destruction of Belgium and northern France would continue owing to the fighting and unavoidable acts of aggression during a retreat, even in spite of the modification of recent methods, and desolation would be spread into our own country. The physical burden had increased incalculably. Furthermore, both France and Belgium would shy at the further destruction inseparably connected, in any case, with an advance. In that fact the administration saw an advantage in the political situation of the moment; for by it these opponents themselves acquired an interest in an immediate armistice, a stronger one than they would have, for instance, after reaching the German frontier.

The conference was continued in the subsequent third session of October 17 (No. 58). In the meantime bad news had arrived from Austria. Otherwise conditions remained the same. Ludendorff himself advocated the continuation of the peace negotiations, taking into consideration the dreaded defection of Austria, it is true; yet still contending that it was nevertheless unnecessary to agree to all conditions; there would always be time to give way. "If we should actually be beaten, then we should have to capitulate

at once. It might be dangerous if we were to suffer a defeat at Verdun; otherwise he does not consider the danger especially great."

After these conferences it again appeared to be necessary, in view of Ludendorff's undecided and in part contradictory opinions with regard to the military situation, to hold a hearing of other generals; this time because the danger consisted in part of a *too favorable* opinion (No. 62). But Ludendorff's opposition to such a hearing had not yet been set aside, and it was feared that his resignation would hasten the collapse of the Army (cf. No. 55).

On October 20, Hindenburg sent the following telephone message (No. 63):

Turkey has commenced separate negotiations. Austria-Hungary will follow soon. We shall very soon stand alone in Europe. The western front is showing great tension. A break through is possible, although I do not fear it. By breaking off contact with the enemy . . . a durable resistance might be organized. . . . But even if we should be beaten, we should not really be worse off than if we were to accept everything at present.

This presented a very unfavorable picture of the military situation, ending once more with the opinion that if the war were carried on to an unsuccessful conclusion, Germany could not be worse off.

Then followed the German reply of October 20. This time there arose a distinct difference of opinion with the Supreme Army Command. It arose principally in connection with the cessation of the U-Boat warfare. At a conference of German representatives abroad (Rosen, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, Count Metternich) called before the dispatch of the note, they had unanimously declared themselves in favor of concession in the matter of the U-Boat question.

Numbers 67 to 75 contain more detailed information concerning the last stage of the U-Boat war. The hope was expressed that such an unfortunate incident as the torpedoing of an American passenger-steamer might not interfere. But just at this time, that is, before the dispatch of the last note referred to, the news of the torpedoing of the *Leinster* arrived, and public feeling in the United States was thus accentuated.

In Wilson's third note, of October 23, 1918 (No. 76), the President repeated the reference to his message of January 18, 1918, and to his subsequent message. He stated that he had proposed to the other governments, in case they should be inclined to bring about peace on the conditions and principles suggested, to take steps toward the conclusion of an armistice, and he added:

The acceptance of these armistice conditions by Germany will afford the best concrete evidence that she accepts the principles of peace from which the whole action proceeds.

The note concludes with more or less lengthy arguments in which the President again expresses doubt concerning the state of governmental authority within Germany.

Following this note, the documents dealing with the abdication of the Emperor and the Crown Prince increase in number. Whether Wilson intended to make a prerequisite of the abdication cannot be clearly determined from the text of the version of the Foreign Office (No. 96), but the impression gained ground that the abdication, if it should occur voluntarily and before the acceptance of the armistice conditions, would serve to facilitate and simplify the negotiations (Nos. 77, 78, 94, 95, and cf. No. 59). A longer discussion of this matter took place than was put down in writing and the documents are therefore incomplete.

Furthermore, the question of the retirement of Hindenburg and especially of Ludendorff was considered in this connection. The question was intimately connected with the demand of the Cabinet to hear the opinion of other generals, a demand that up to that time had constantly been set aside on account of Ludendorff's threat of retirement. Ludendorff again energetically protested against the hearing (No. 82). At the afternoon session of October 26, von Payer announced that the Emperor had accepted Ludendorff's tender of resignation, but had persuaded Hindenburg to retain his office (*ibid.*). At this stage arrived the news that Vienna had applied for a separate peace (Nos. 83, 84). The German reply to Wilson was sent off (No. 85).

On October 28, Generals von Mudra and von Gallwitz arrived (No. 86). They gave as their opinion that every possible means must be made use of to prove that matters were not quite at their worst. The news of Austria's separate move, announced to them during the session, did, indeed, cause grave worry and doubt as to the possibility of serious resistance.

A fruitless exchange of telegrams with Vienna for the purpose of preventing a separate peace, and the news of the Turkish armistice follow (Nos. 87 to 92). On the 5th of November the new First Quartermaster General, Lieutenant General Gröner, submitted comprehensive opinion regarding the situation (No. 100). In the meantime the quiet policy of the logical continuation of the irrevocable step taken on the 3d of October attained one important result. The Lansing note arrived, in which it was expressly stated that the Allied Governments had accepted Wilson's points as a basis for the final compact of peace, with two clearly defined exceptions (No. 101).

The conclusion of the armistice ensued (Nos. 102 to 110). The conditions attending the cessation of the struggle were excessive. But no refusal was possible. The road taken upon the 3d of October had to be followed to the end. Once the German Government, at the instigation of the Supreme Army Command, had itself designated Wilson's points as a serious

basis for peace, and after the enemy had also bound themselves to observe these points, the German people considered the war to be at an end. Wilson was the most popular man in the whole country, and the people, despite their indignation at the severity of the terms of the armistice, trusted in the establishment of an ultimate peace through the impartial application of his principles. Any attempt at postponement would have been at variance with public opinion; wherever the troops suspected any such attempt, they revolted. At this stage no further differences of opinion with the Supreme Army Command existed. On November 10, the latter sent a wire signed by Hindenburg simultaneously to Berlin and to the Armistice Commission negotiating with Foch, stating on what points an attempt must be made to obtain a mitigation of the conditions (No. 107). The telegram ended with the words:

If it is impossible to gain these points, it would nevertheless be advisable to conclude the agreement. In case of the refusal of points 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 a fiery protest should be made, and an appeal addressed to Wilson.

On November 11, 1918, the armistice went into force. With that event the documents come to a close.

The Allied and Associated Governments have since taken advantage of the utterly defenseless state in which Germany was placed by the surrender of her arms, to incorporate in the peace treaty terms which, as Lloyd George stated in the Lower House are designed "to make an example of Germany"; although they are contrary to the Wilsonian principles and to the formal promises in Lansing's note of November 5, 1918. These promises were thus broken; but they still remain as a foundation for the immutable demand for a revision of the treaty of peace.

NOTE

The memoranda regarding the sessions of the Secretaries of State (Nos. 35, 38, 39, 42, 54, 55, 58, 82, 86) were not in some cases submitted to the participants to be read after the sessions; they were ordinary service reports which were prepared either at the sessions or directly after their conclusion, partly by the Under-Secretary of State at the Imperial Chancery, partly by the Chief of the Press Bureau of the Imperial Chancery, partly by a reporting councilor of the Imperial Chancery. Therefore they cannot be regarded as literally reliable documents, although they correctly report the general course of the proceedings. The memorandum regarding the great session of October 17, 1918 (No. 57), can lay claim to reliability in its least detail; it was drawn up with care from a stenographic report, and was also submitted to General Ludendorff.

PRELIMINARY CONFERENCES—ABANDONMENT OF
THE HOPE OF OBTAINING PEACE BY
VICTORY—NOS. 1 TO 3

NO. 1

CONFERENCE AT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS ON AUGUST
14, 1918

Signed protocol

Present:

His Majesty the Emperor and King,
His Royal Highness the Crown Prince,
The Imperial Chancellor,
General Field Marshal von Hindenburg,
General Ludendorff, First Quartermaster General,
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
Adjutant General von Plessen,
von Berg, Chief of the Civil Cabinet,
Baron von Marschall, chief of the Military Cabinet.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR describes the internal situation. Public tired of war. Food supplies insufficient, clothing conditions even worse. Suffrage reform.

General LUDENDORFF: More severe internal discipline required. Most energetic coordination of international forces. Punishment of Lichnowsky.

The SECRETARY OF STATE describes the external situation. At the present time, the enemy is more confident of victory and more willing to fight than ever. The reason for this is partly their recent military successes in the west; the chief cause, however, is their original and ever-increasing conviction that the Allied Powers, with their comparatively inexhaustible reserves of men, raw materials and manufactures, must crush the allied Central Powers, *with the help of time alone*. According to the views of our enemies, time is working in their favor. The longer the war lasts, so much more is the Central Powers' stock of men, raw materials and manufactures diminished, while the Allies can count on an increase along all three lines. And in addition, the Allies have just lately been inspired with the hope of adding to the time factor the advantage of military successes. So much for the enemy.

The neutral Powers are heartily sick of the war; they, too, are becoming fixed in the belief that the Central Powers are doomed to defeat by time

alone; to be sure, the neutral Powers would prefer to see a peace without victory for either party. Most of the neutral Powers are in sympathy with a victory for our enemies. But more than anything else they want to see the war come to an end, no matter by what means. Spain's attitude with regard to our torpedoing is a proof of this—an attitude which leaves us to face the problem of either limiting the U-Boat war, or of going to war with that country. This attitude is all the more serious, in that if it becomes known, other neutrals would adopt it.

Our allies: Austria declares, and our own information corroborates this opinion, that she has come to the end of her rope, that she can only hold out through the winter at the longest; that even a winter campaign is more than doubtful.

Bulgaria is making the most exorbitant demands for subsidies and for the delivery of supplies, and is ostensibly capable of little, on account of the exhaustion of her army.

Turkey has plunged herself into a war of booty and extermination in the Caucasus, is crossing our designs, and meets our warnings and expostulations with the familiar resistance of the Oriental and the weaker party. We have the choice of either letting our allies go their own way, or of complying with their arrogant demands. In our position, that choice is determined for us in advance. *The Chief of the General Staff of the Army in the Field has so far defined the military situation as to say that we can no longer hope to break down the fighting spirit of our enemies by military action, and that we must set as the object of our campaign that of gradually wearing down the enemy's fighting spirit by a strategic defensive.*¹ The political leaders of the Government bow to this decision of the greatest military leader that the war has brought forth, and draw from it the political conclusion that it would be politically impossible for us to break down the fighting spirit of our opponents, and that we are therefore compelled to consider this military situation in the further conduct of our policies.

His Royal Highness the CROWN PRINCE declares that he subscribes to all that has been said by General Ludendorff and the Secretary of State, and emphatically asserts that the "home" front must be subjected to the strictest discipline.

HIS MAJESTY: General officers commanding army corps districts and the Minister of War must preserve better order in the interior. New orders to this effect will be issued to the generals. The civil officials should cooperate in the strictest maintenance of the national authority.

With regard to recruits, the country must be more finely combed. There are still crowds of young men running loose about Berlin.

His Majesty approved the comment on the political situation abroad, but

¹ The italics were introduced at the time of printing. This applies practically to all the documents published herein.

the enemy was suffering also; it was losing many men by death, its industries were already beginning to lie idle for lack of raw materials; even food supplies were running short. This year's harvest in England was poor; her tonnage was diminishing daily. Perhaps England would gradually become a convert to the cause of peace as a result of these deficiencies.

His Majesty stated that the description of the political situation was correct; *we must prepare to seek the opportune moment for coming to an understanding with the enemy.* Neutral nations (the Emperor designated some) were suitable intermediaries. The establishment of a propaganda commission was desirable for the object of weakening the enemy's confidence in victory and for the purpose of increasing the confidence of the German people. Fiery speeches must be made by eminent private citizens (Ballin, Heckscher), or by statesmen. Men of suitable capacity should be called to serve on the commission, rather than officials. The Foreign Office ought to give it political instructions.

Individual departments should not work against each other, as they have long been doing, or prosecute a policy of mystic secrecy toward each other. Military and civil authorities should cooperate, the War Minister should support the commanding generals, and not leave them in the lurch.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR spoke in favor of the energetic maintenance of authority in the interior. With regard to propaganda, there already existed a comprehensive program which was being put into execution.

Diplomatic feelers must be thrown out at an opportune moment preparatory to an understanding with the enemy. Such a moment might present itself *after the next successes in the west.*

General Field Marshal VON HINDENBURG argued *that it would be possible to remain fixed on French territory, and thereby in the end enforce our will upon the enemy.*¹

The signatures follow:

H. August 14.
L. August 14.
HERTLING. August 17.
v. H. August 14.
WILHELM I. R.
v. B. August 19.
WILHELM, CROWN PRINCE.

Hertling's letter of August 17 is added as a supplement:

To complete the record of the Secretary of State, I venture to attach the following to my statement:

¹ This sentence of the General Field Marshal read originally in the protocol: G. v. H. "hopes" that it might "yet" be possible, etc. The alteration to the more decided form—"argued that it would be possible"—was, judging by the writing and the pencil used, made by General Ludendorff.

I agreed to approach the highest judicial authorities in the Empire and in Prussia immediately, and to give them official notice of the extremely damaging effects which were being caused by the enemy's dissemination on our front of the Lichnowsky memorandum, as it would unquestionably influence any judgment on the situation.

2. [*sic*] With regard to the suffrage reform in Prussia, I argued that the promise given by His Majesty the Emperor and King must be kept, and that upon assuming the post of Imperial Chancellor, I had expressly taken upon myself this obligation. Therefore the Government must do everything it can to put through the suffrage reform in Prussia. Any suggestion that it has neither the courage nor the power required in this matter would at once deprive it of all confidence and all authority; and in that case, it would not only be a question of the person of the minister, but that of the monarchy and the dynasty being directly affected.

NO. 2

MEMORANDUM OF VON HINTZE, THEN SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ON DISCUSSIONS WITH GENERAL LUDENDORFF IN JULY AND AUGUST, 1918¹

In the middle of July, 1918, before assuming the post of Secretary of State, I put to General Ludendorff at Avesnes the formal and definite question as to whether he was certain of finally and decisively beating the enemy in the offensive then going on. General Ludendorff repeated my question, and said in answer: "I can reply to that with a decided *Yes*."

Before the conference *à quatre* between the Imperial Chancellor, the General Field Marshal, General Ludendorff and myself—I think it was on the 13th of August—General Ludendorff took me aside and admitted to me that although he had told me in July that he had been certain of breaking the enemy's fighting mettle and compelling him to accept peace by the offensive that was then in progress, he was now no longer sure of it. To my question as to what he thought of the further conduct of the war, General Ludendorff replied that we should be enabled through a strategic defensive to weaken the enemy's fighting spirit and gradually bring him to terms. During the succeeding discussion *à quatre* nobody touched again on this important subject. I took it up again for the first time at the Crown Council, on August 14, and dealt with it (see the protocol). General Ludendorff at that time described the "great offensive" as no longer possible, but talked of a strategic defensive with occasional offensive advances, with the good prospect of eventually weakening the fighting mettle of the enemy.

¹ These notes Mr. von Hintze gave to the Document Division of the Foreign Office in the spring of 1919.

General Field Marshal von Hindenburg judged the military outlook even more favorably. The political situation forbade me, as I explained in detail at the Crown Council, to believe in any such success from a strategic defensive. I made that statement at the Crown Council, and demanded authorization to prepare the way for peace by diplomatic means. Under this head I also included some limitation of our previous war aims. The Supreme Army Command was not at that time ready to agree (see the final sentence of the protocol of August 14). The authority granted me to take steps toward peace was thus restricted,¹ but I hoped to remove the obstacle gradually, with reason, as the future proved. Still, the following condition was a material limitation of my authority: "The opportune moment must be awaited before any attempt to lay diplomatic wires is made; such a moment would offer itself after the next (our) success on the western front." Later, in September, the proper moment was held to be that "when the movement of our Army to the rear should be brought to a halt, perhaps at the Siegfried line."

NO. 3

SESSION OF THE ROYAL MINISTRY OF STATE

*Extract*²

BERLIN, September 3, 1918.

At today's session of the Royal Ministry of State the following matters were transacted:

The PRIME MINISTER first expressed his thanks to the Ministers of State for their friendly greetings on his seventy-fifth birthday and for the floral tribute.

He next discussed the actual political situation, which is closely bound up with the existing military situation. He hoped that the Minister of War could give us some more definite information concerning the latter.

It is the desire of those in authority that every possible means should be tried which might lead to an understanding with the enemy. *A proposal of peace could not and should not be made, as it would only be scornfully declined by our enemies.* On the other hand, feelers must be thrown out and advantage taken of every opportunity that could lead to the goal, if possible through neutral or other appropriate persons. We should say something like this to the enemy: "*You see that you are unable to conquer us. Germany will, without doubt, victoriously maintain her right to existence and her place*"

¹ By clinging to the war aims, set up for the case of victory. (Note of von Hintze.)

² The extract is given as it is found in the archives of the Foreign Office.

in the sun in the war of defense which has been forced upon her. But we are ever ready to conclude an honorable peace as has repeatedly been emphasized by the German Government in unmistakable terms." A definite program of the individual peace conditions is now being drawn up at the order of His Majesty the Emperor. This attitude toward the matter was determined upon at conferences which were held at Spa under the presidency of the Emperor, at which, besides Generals von Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the Crown Prince took part, and at which complete agreement was reached by all the participants. The situation is made more difficult owing to the unconditional desire for peace which is making itself increasingly felt in Austria-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Government had given him to understand that it was going to notify all the enemy nations of its willingness to conclude peace. He had, it was true, succeeded in preventing such a fatal step, but the desire that it should be taken was now being expressed more strongly than ever in Austria-Hungary. Secretary of State von Hintze had just gone to Vienna for this very reason, and therefore was, to his own great regret, unable to take part in today's meeting.

Without doubt the popular frame of mind in our own country, was at present depressed and therefore we must make a serious effort to end the war with honor to ourselves. The question of successfully combating this present popular depression, *which was not justified by the military situation in itself*, had also been considered at the conferences referred to at Spa. The chief thing was to restore the confidence of the people, and to put a stop to the mischievous reaction between the front and the homeland, which was to be observed everywhere. An organization suitable to deal with this matter, which was to carry on a propaganda to this end, both in the interior of the country and abroad, had already been associated with the Foreign Office and placed under the direction of Secretary of State von Hintze. It had already entered upon its activities and had already accomplished some beneficial results.

The MINISTER OF WAR stated that he could say little about the present military situation. He wanted first to go to Headquarters in order to get more detailed information. But he was compelled to point out the great difficulty which now existed in providing reinforcements. He must and would keep the most recent levy away from the front; but that would necessitate a more thorough combing-out of the civilian population.

Minister of State VON WALDOW expressed the fear that, as a result of these measures, an insufficient number of laborers would be left in the country, especially for the coming potato harvest.

The MINISTER OF WAR refuted this objection by pointing out that it was just for this purpose that the most recent levy, kept away from the front, should be used.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS called attention to the fact that he had been required by the Ministry of War to let go another fifteen per cent of his personnel. He hardly believed that he could accede to this demand without endangering the efficiency of his office.

The MINISTER OF WAR hoped that it would nevertheless prove possible, as it had been done in other public services.

HEINRICH.

STEPS PREPARATORY TO BRINGING ABOUT NEUTRAL MEDIATION—OPPOSITION TO MORE FAR-REACHING STEPS OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY—COLLAPSE OF BULGARIA—NOS. 4 TO 10

NO. 4

CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PEACE PROPOSAL¹

BERLIN, September 19, 1918.

August 10. Report from General von Cramon is made known stating that Emperor Karl has categorically declared that peace must be concluded under any circumstances during the course of the year 1918, and that if no general peace was negotiated he would have to conclude a separate peace.

August 14. Conference at General Headquarters.

Present: His Majesty, Crown Prince, Imperial Chancellor, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Secretary of State, Plessen, Berg, Marschall.

Political deduction: *We are unable from a military standpoint to break the fighting spirit of our opponents, and are forced to consider the military situation in the further conduct of our policies. Diplomatic feelers with reference to an understanding with the enemy must be thrown out at the appropriate moment. Such a moment would present itself after the next success in the west. The Supreme Army Command asserts that it will be possible to maintain a footing on French territory and thereby eventually force our will upon our enemy.*

August 14 and 15. Conference at General Headquarters with the Emperor Karl and Count Burian on the possibility of bringing about peace. Count Burian's views were:

1. That the step should be taken at the earliest possible moment.
2. That the step should take the form of a direct appeal to all belligerent nations.

Our views were, on the other hand:

1. *A favorable moment for the step should be awaited. The present moment is premature because of the uncertain military situation. It would be better to wait until we were firmly established on a new line, or until some military success should cause a reaction among our enemies.*

2. *As concerned the form, neutral mediation would be preferable.*

¹ Report of the Foreign Office.

BURIAN reserved the right to formulate his peace proposal in detail.

In a conversation between the two Emperors, His Majesty strove to make the advantages of our plan clear to the Emperor Karl, and gained the impression that the Emperor Karl was convinced by his arguments.

Final results: Negotiations are to be continued; for that purpose Count Burian desires the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State to visit Vienna at the earliest possible moment.

August 21. Prince Hohenlohe submits the first definite draft of the Austro-Hungarian note, which is essentially a direct appeal to all the belligerent nations to send delegates to some place in a neutral country for a confidential and non-binding discussion of the fundamental principles on which a peace might be concluded.

August 25 and 26. It becomes known here that Count Burian attempted on August 19, that is, after the arrangement agreed upon at Spa behind our back, to exercise pressure on the Bulgarian and Turkish Governments to declare their agreement to his proposition. Count Burian even gave the impression, according to their accounts, that the German Government had already declared its agreement with his proposal. At the same time he announced on his own account his purpose of proceeding with the *démarche* within eight or ten days under any circumstances, as he hoped thereby to win the public opinion of the world in our behalf. By taking this step, Count Burian departed from the agreement entered upon by Count Czernin—always to deal with our eastern allies only *after* an understanding had been reached between Berlin and Vienna.

Ambassador at Pera and Minister at Sofia are informed of the exact facts in the case.

August 27. Although Count Burian had been informed, through oral communication with Prince Hohenlohe as well as by notification to Count Wedel, of our belief that *the step proposed by him was inexpedient, and that, on the other hand, we regarded neutral mediation at the appropriate moment as the only proper way to proceed*, Prince Hohenlohe handed over a note in which Count Burian propounds afresh his arguments in favor of immediate procedure and in favor of the correctness of his method, and pleads for the prompt fulfilment of the promise given him with regard to the visit to Vienna of the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State for the purpose of combined deliberation.

August 28. Count Wedel is informed that Count Burian's assertion, to the effect that we had agreed to his proposal, is not in accordance with the facts. We had merely held out the prospect of an examination of the Austro-Hungarian note, and emphasized the fact that *we considered the present moment to be premature for the proposed démarche toward our enemies*. Therefore no understanding between ourselves and the Austro-Hungarian Government as to the *modus procedendi* had as yet been reached. Count

Burian had thus, by approaching the Bulgarian and Turkish Governments behind our back, violated an established tradition. The Minister's declaration that, in any case, he was going to proceed within eight or ten days, had caused even greater astonishment. Count Wedel is requested to interrogate Count Burian on this subject, and point out the grave consequences of such procedure. Should Count Burian fail to give definite assurance that he would not repeat such conduct in the future, Count Wedel is to state, as his own personal opinion, that he can not promise any satisfactory result from a visit of the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State to Vienna. Furthermore, Count Wedel was supplied with arguments with which to influence Count Burian in favor of action by the neutral mediation planned by us. In this connection we assume *that neutral mediators before undertaking their mission, require of us that they be informed as to the basis on which we should be willing to conclude a peace. We should be able to comply with this demand on the condition that our enemies should also notify the mediators of their general war aims. After this fashion we would prepare for a mutual exchange of opinions without suffering the disadvantage of appearing as the petitioners.*

August 30. Talaat, who is stopping in Vienna on his way to Berlin, is to be requested to advocate *our* point of view at Vienna.

Prince Hohenlohe calls on Secretary of State and reads him a telegram from Burian: Peace step imperative, cannot be delayed. Burian will undertake it himself, if we do not cooperate. Neutral intervention cannot be counted on. Secretary of State replied in emphatic manner: Astonished at action in connection with Bulgaria and Turkey behind our back, and more in favor of neutral mediation at a later period. Count Wedel receives an urgent warning in this regard; seriousness of the situation which might arise for Austria-Hungary as a result of separate procedure must be considered.

September 1. Count Wedel reports: Emperor Karl is the influential force.

On the strength of yesterday's representations (warning of September [*sic*; should be August] 30) Count Burian has just succeeded in persuading Emperor Karl to agree to a short delay.

September 3 to 5. As a suitable basis for an understanding with Count Burian on the peace question was not reached by the 2d of September, the Secretary of State left for Vienna with Under-Secretary of State von Stumm (the Imperial Chancellor not going, despite the Austro-Hungarian request). Exhaustive oral discussions with Count Burian and even a personal interview of the Secretary of State with his Majesty the Emperor Karl lead to no agreement. *The Secretary of State advocates anew the German proposal that the peace move take place through neutral mediation and at a somewhat later and more propitious moment (in about two weeks, after the completion of*

the retirement of the German Army). Count Burian's reply to that is: *At once and direct*. In spite of apparent occasional concessions on the part of Count Burian and the agreement by Wekerle and Arz, at the end of the discussion, which lasted three days Count Burian remained firmly attached to his original point of view.

September 7. Upon the intervention of General Cramon and Commander in Chief von Arz, Emperor Karl consents to a postponement of the Austro-Hungarian note, and requests an answer to the following questions from General Field Marshal von Hindenburg:

1. Where, that is to say, on what line, does the Supreme Army Command intend finally to take up the defensive?

2. When will this line be reached?

3. What is the approximate date at which the proposed initiation of conferences aiming at peace negotiations will appear suitable to the Supreme Army Command, in view of the military situation?

In the opinion of the Emperor Karl, every postponement was unfavorable to us, as the enemy thereby gained the opportunity of permanently strengthening his position.

September 10. General Field Marshal von Hindenburg states positively in a personal interview with His Excellency von Hintze at General Headquarters that he can not approve of the dispatch of Austria-Hungary's proposed note (*i. e.*, the direct appeal to all belligerent nations). He considers this step as ruinous for our Army and our peoples. On the other hand he approves of the immediate mediation of a neutral Power for the purpose of bringing about a conference.

At the same time renewed consultations are taking place between Count Wedel and Count Burian. Count Burian declares that he is determined to send out the peace note, and can not delay any longer. Count Wedel warns against too great haste, and urges him to wait at least until the result of the pending and imminent consultation of the Secretary of State with the Supreme Army Command has been made known. Impression gained that Count Burian is perhaps susceptible to our arguments, but Emperor Karl the actuating influence. Consent obtained with difficulty to Burian's proposal to the Emperor Karl to wait a few days more. Dispatch of the peace note scarcely to be prevented; only a brief respite can be obtained at the best.

The possibility of His Majesty the Emperor directly influencing the Emperor Karl is again taken under consideration. His Majesty the Emperor is under the impression that Emperor Karl at the last conference at Spa had declared himself to be agreeable to the instigation of the mediation of some neutral Power.

September 11. As the result of fresh discussions between His Majesty, the Supreme Army Command and the Secretary of State, agreement is reached on

*the immediate initiation of a peace démarche by some neutral Power. Vienna is to be invited to join or to agree thereto; also Sofia and Constantinople.*¹

At a special audience granted General von Cramon by Emperor Karl, the latter objects to mediation by a neutral Power and for the rest reserves his decision, without expressing himself definitely.

Count Wedel expresses himself as skeptical of the effect of a telegram from His Majesty, also as regards the cooperation of Tisza and Wekerle in our favor; he considers that a brief postponement of action may be attained, but not any modification of the determination.

The Bulgarian Government is also invited by Count Oberndorff to support our diplomatic action at Vienna in favor of neutral mediation.

Both Governments promise their support, but hold forth no hope of success.

Count Wedel reports, after learning that we are agreed on an immediate peace move, that Vienna will not agree to the plan of neutral mediation, *as the authorities at Vienna are not willing to be deprived of the rôle of peace-makers*, and as the Emperor Karl sees in that rôle the promise of the restoration of the lost confidence in the Crown, which, in view of the dread of a revolution, is looked upon as the principal object to be attained. Such a restoration of confidence is looked for, even if the *démarche* should prove unsuccessful, as the note, in emanating from Vienna, would have the approbation of public opinion, now controlled by a longing for peace; thus, the dispatch of the Austrian note is a certainty. They will content themselves in Vienna with having notified us of the *démarche* in advance, and would prefer to forego our consent than to give up their project.

September 12. Count Wedel is directed to seek Count Burian at once to warn him again against his peace move, and to explain to him once more that the impression will be gained in Germany that Austria-Hungary is betraying us. We are not in a position to prevent this impression. Count Wedel must speak again in favor of neutral mediation, and explain particularly that in case this should fail, every other way would remain open to us, whereas if Burian's step should fail, no other way would be open to us, least of all, that of calling upon neutrals. German Government could not admit, after the Austro-Hungarian step had been taken, that it had agreed to it beforehand. Responsibility for *blocking the way to mediation* would rest with Count Burian.

Count Wedel reports that, when the menace to the alliance was pointed out, Burian solemnly announced that he would dissipate any doubt as to fidelity to the alliance by conclusive declarations. A little later the Chief

¹ Von Hintze's telegram from General Headquarters on September 11, 1918 (received 5.55 p.m.), on which this paragraph of the report is based, reads: "His Majesty and the Supreme Army Command have agreed on the immediate initiation of a *démarche* by a neutral Power. Kindly wire this to Vienna Ambassador with instructions to notify the Austro-Hungarian Government and invite them to join or to agree thereto; same to Minister at Sofia, Count Bernstorff and Talaat Pasha. Please advise Imperial Chancellor. Hintze."

of the Cabinet, Count Colorado, visited Count Wedel and informed him that Count Burian was going to dispatch the peace note on Saturday, the fourteenth of the month. The reasons for this are known to us, and Burian was strengthened in his purpose by the statement made by the Swiss Minister at Vienna to the Turkish Ambassador to the effect that Switzerland had put out peace feelers toward the Entente and had received from that coalition the reply that the mediation of a neutral Power would be regarded as an unfriendly act. The new Swedish Premier had expressed himself to the same effect, and with regard to the *time* for the action, General Field Marshal von Hindenburg had definitely declared himself in favor of instant action. Burian begs us to influence our press so as to avoid any bad feeling. If, despite our influence, any such feeling should arise, he guarantees to remove all doubt as to Austria's fidelity to the alliance within twenty-four hours. In conclusion, Burian begs the German Government to agree as soon as possible to the reply to the note, in order that any future misconception by our opponents, such as taking the action to mean a separate step by Austria-Hungary, might be discounted in advance. It is intended to issue the note on Sunday morning.

Prince Hohenlohe informs the Secretary of State in writing that he has received a telegram from Count Burian announcing that Austria-Hungary's *démarche* would take place on Saturday, the fourteenth of the month.

September 13. (Telegram received at 2.50 p.m.) To renewed representations by Count Wedel, Burian repeats his familiar argument against neutral mediation and in favor of his own program, with the further statement *that the die has already been cast*. He takes upon himself full and complete responsibility for the act. He will do everything he can to dissipate any doubts as to fidelity to the alliance. Repeats his plea for Germany's speedy consent. He lays great weight on this, in order to avoid even the appearance of dissension.

General von Cramon requests another audience with the Emperor Karl.

The Emperor Karl adheres to his point of view; if people in Germany were of the opinion that Austria-Hungary was thinking of standing no longer side by side with Germany, such a doubt as to his fidelity to his allies was actually an insult to him. He has been faithful and will continue so. He earnestly hopes that Germany's answer will be such that it will not be injurious to the allied Central Powers. He had informed the Emperor William of his intentions in the most loyal manner, and was firmly convinced that the note going out on the fourteenth would make a favorable impression on all the belligerent Powers.

His Majesty receives a telegram from the Emperor Karl in which the latter voices his adherence to the form of action planned by Austria and *declines neutral mediation*, and begs His Majesty's earliest consent. The Austro-Hungarian military plenipotentiary telegraphs back to the Em-

peror Karl that His Majesty entreats him to delay the proposed step, at least until His Majesty's answer arrives. This can in no case occur before the morning of the fourteenth, as His Majesty must first get into communication with the Imperial Chancellor.

September 14. His Majesty the Emperor sends a telegram to the Emperor Karl expressing regret that the latter should put his project into execution without regard to the German point of view. The treaty of alliance requires that Germany and Austria-Hungary should act only in complete agreement on questions of such far-reaching importance, otherwise the alliance loses its value and significance. Pointing out the dangers of the Austro-Hungarian step and explaining once again the advantages of neutral mediation, His Majesty expresses the hope and assurance that the Emperor Karl will realize the gravity of the situation even at the last moment, and will direct his Government to abandon the proposed *démarche*.

Count Wedel reports in the afternoon that up to that time Emperor William's telegram of reply had not been brought to the knowledge of the Foreign Office, and that the affair was already so far advanced that it could in no case be retracted.

A telephone report from Vienna in the afternoon states that the newspaper representatives were already assembling at the Foreign Office to receive information about the peace negotiations.

During the evening the German press and party-leaders were informed of the Austro-Hungarian step by the Secretary of State in person.

A little later the text of the Austro-Hungarian note arrived here through the telegraph offices.

NO. 5

NOTE

There are telegrams of September 18 and later dates which contain information of attempts that were made, in connection with the Austrian step, to bring about the *mediation of a neutral Power*. According to a telegram of August 29, the favorable acceptance of such a proposal was expected. The exchange of notes inaugurated at that time was drawn out until the last days of September, but the desired result was not attained. The publication of the documents regarding this affair must be left to a later period, as the matter does not concern Germany alone.

NO. 6

TELEGRAM

Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

Urgent.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *September 26, 1918.*

General Ludendorff sent for me tonight to inform me that General von Cramon had wired that, according to Vienna reports, Bulgaria was going to conclude a separate peace immediately. Upon the announcement of this intention in Sofia, fierce vituperations were hurled at Germany for having forsaken her ally. In case this news should be verified, Austria wished to come to an understanding with Roumania.

General Ludendorff is likewise of this opinion and begs Your Excellency to take further action in regard to Roumania.

I urgently recommended not going ahead too fast, and not sacrificing our ally Bulgaria for our enemy Roumania.

The Austro-Hungarian military plenipotentiary, Field Marshal Baron Klepsch, who was present at the conference, drew up with my assistance the following telegram to the Austrian Army Command and sent it off:

General Cramon's notification of Bulgaria's intention to conclude a separate peace has caused the Supreme Army Command to forward five divisions which will mostly take position near Nish, despite the serious state of affairs on all fronts.

In consideration of the grave importance of the situation, the Supreme Army Command requests that at least one more Austro-Hungarian division, besides the two already provided, be assigned to Bulgaria, in order to assure safety of communications with Roumania and Turkey. Furthermore, the Supreme Army Command is of the opinion that we should come to an understanding with Roumania, in case it should be established without question in Berlin and Vienna that Bulgaria is actually concluding a separate peace.

General Ludendorff told me that the Bulgarian Army had apparently been entirely disorganized. He would march on Nish with a strong force and try to get in touch with General von Pflanzer to the west.

I am asked most respectfully to request in the name of the Supreme Army Command that Counselor of Legation Horstmann be urged to keep the sharpest eye on Roumania, as any Roumanian disturbances in our rear might have disastrous results.

Whether the German division ordered from the Ukraine through Constantinople to Bulgaria will be able to cooperate in Bulgaria at the right time, appears questionable; still it will be of the greatest value for the protection of Constantinople.

LERSNER.

NO. 7

TELEGRAM

*Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office*GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *September 27, 1918.*

This Thursday morning, early, I wired to Count Oberndorff: "If Your Excellency is of opinion that German troops should be moved to Sofia, I respectfully request to be notified by wire."

Whereupon Count Oberndorff answered me: "For political reasons I urgently recommend the sending of German troops as quickly as possible to Sofia and environs."

Taking Your Excellency's acquiescence for granted, I thereupon induced General Ludendorff to send the following telegram to the Commander in Chief, General von Scholtz:

Presence of German troops at Sofia can save the situation in Bulgaria. I have therefore given orders to disentrain all German troops passing through Sofia, and to assemble them on the Sofia-Pirot road, just west of Sofia. Officially these troops are to serve as support for the retreating Bulgarian army, actually they are to protect the King against his Government. I beg Your Excellency to send to Sofia at once the ablest German general, to take over the command of the troops and lead them. He should at once get into communication with the German Legation.

I added, as from myself to Count Oberndorff:

Presumably the German troops will arrive on the evening of Friday, the twenty-seventh, or on Saturday the twenty-eighth. They will consist for the present of two battalions of infantry, four batteries, and some cavalry. Here at Spa a very sanguine view is taken of the situation, and it is definitely expected that the Bulgarian catastrophe will be prevented.

I venture respectfully to suggest that Your Excellency impart the foregoing information to General Gantscheff at your discretion.

General Ludendorff requests Your Excellency to send Count Oberndorff further directions from now on, and to give information to Colonel von Massow.

LERSNER.

NO. 8

TELEGRAM

*The Imperial Military Plenipotentiary to the Foreign Office*¹

Will reach Sofia tomorrow, Sunday, with General Michel Sawow. He is already in touch with the King and looks forward with confidence to his coming task of overthrowing the Government and reorganizing the army. Willisen will travel with us as far as Jagodina.

MASSOW.

NO. 9

TELEGRAM

SOFIA, September 30, 1918.

Bulgarian Government has just received a telegram from Liaptscheff at Saloniki that *an armistice has been signed*. It has requested the communication of the terms.

OBERNDORFF.

NO. 10

TELEGRAM

Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 2, 1918.

After I had presented Your Excellency's telegram to General Ludendorff, the Supreme Army Command wired to the Scholtz command:

As nearly as the situation can be estimated here, all hope of holding Bulgaria politically on our side must be abandoned. Therefore, the German troops on hand in old Bulgaria are henceforth to be made use of for purely military purposes. Among the most obvious of these purposes is that of barring the road of the Entente through Sofia to the Danube line as long as possible. Destruction of railroads must at first take place only on Serbian territory; those on Bulgarian soil should be so treated only upon an imminent advance of the Entente troops. The communication of our Army unit at Sofia with our body of troops at Nish must remain assured. Compulsory measures against Bulgaria must be avoided for political reasons. Massow must be informed.

I respectfully suggest that Count Oberndorff be notified, so that there will be no misunderstanding.

LERSNER.

¹ Received by O. K. Scholtz, September 29, 1918.

STEPS PREPARATORY TO A PROPOSAL OF PEACE TO PRESIDENT WILSON—NOS. 11 TO 20

NO. 11

TELEGRAM

Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *September 21, 1918.*

Personal.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE:

General Ludendorff has asked me whether Your Excellency intended to approach America on the subject of peace negotiations through Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg at Berne.

LERSNER.

NO. 12

MEMORANDUM¹

BERLIN, *September 28, 1918.*

The most important prerequisite for the institution of peace is the formation, upon the free initiative of His Majesty the Emperor, of a new Government on a broad national basis. For this purpose it would be desirable that there should arrive at Berlin as early as tomorrow evening a telegram announcing the acceptance of Count Hertling's resignation as requested by him, and instructing Vice Chancellor von Payer to make immediate suggestions to the Emperor concerning the appointment of the new Chancellor and the composition of the new Government. The new Cabinet should unite all the forces of the people on the broadest national foundation, and make them available for the defense of the Fatherland. In order to attain this object, the Vice Chancellor, upon the express wish of the Emperor, is to consult with the President of the Reichstag and the party leaders, and work out his proposals with the closest cooperation of the representatives of the people.

The new Government thus formed will approach President Wilson at the opportune moment with the request that he undertake the restoration of peace, and to this end propose to all the belligerent parties the sending of plenipotentiary delegates to Washington.

¹ Prepared at the Foreign Office.

According to the wishes of our military authorities, it should be suggested to the President at the same time to invite the belligerents to conclude an immediate armistice, in case of necessity. Our request to Mr. Wilson should be accompanied by the declaration that Germany, and, possibly, the Quadruple Alliance also, is ready to base the peace negotiations on the President's familiar fourteen points.

It might be advisable to forward our communication to Mr. Wilson in the most direct way, and thus leave to his judgment the question of open or secret negotiations. For this purpose it might be the most suitable course for one of the Imperial Ministers at some neutral capital to be instructed to turn over the communication in writing to his American colleague. The choice of such a neutral country should depend on the fitness of the local American representative concerned. A confidential inquiry in this connection is being sent out today to the various Imperial Ministers.

NO. 13

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Secretary of State to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, September 29, 1918, 9.40 p.m.

TO THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE:

On the strength of His Majesty's command and the agreement of the Imperial Chancellor at Vienna, kindly inform Constantinople confidentially that I propose to suggest peace to President Wilson on the basis of his fourteen points, and to invite him to call a peace conference at Washington, at the same time asking for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Whether this same communication can be made to Sofia, depends upon the news that tomorrow will bring.

If our allies agree, the new Imperial Government now in process of formation, will cause this proposal to be laid before President Wilson in such a way as to make it appear that the proposal emanated from itself.

HINTZE.

NO. 14

TELEGRAM

Urgent.

BERLIN, *September 29, 1918.*

1. Vienna.

2. Pera.

Kindly inform confidentially the Government to which you are accredited that the Imperial Government proposes to offer peace to President Wilson on the basis of his fourteen points of January 8, and his four guiding principles of February 11, and to invite him to call a peace conference at Washington, suggesting at the same time an immediate cessation of hostilities. If our allies agree, we should cause this proposal to reach President Wilson in an appropriate way.

For Your Excellency's information, to be used in the strictest confidence: The new Imperial Government on a democratic basis is in process of formation, and will probably be constituted tomorrow. It is to be in power upon the initiation of the peace move.

Absolutely confidential: Prince Hohenlohe has stated that Austria-Hungary is at the end of her resources, and that a conference with us is necessary. Rifaat Pasha in the name of the Porte, has suggested a conference among the allies regarding the situation created by events in Bulgaria, and has thus permitted Turkey's need of peace also to become apparent. Our military situation is a difficult one. How far Your Excellency can take advantage of the above-mentioned facts in the way of hint or suggestion for the support of our proposition, I leave to Your Excellency's judgment.

The earliest agreement possible is urgently desired. Wire report regarding the reception of your action.

Similar instructions go to Vienna and Pera. Sofia will not be notified for the present.

VON STUMM,
Under-Secretary of State.

NO. 15

Sofia.

Urgent.

Absolutely confidential. Exclusively
personal and strictly confidential.

BERLIN, *September 30, 1918.*

General situation compels us to approach America with peace offer as soon as possible.

VON HINTZE.

NO. 16

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Ambassador to the Foreign Office

VIENNA, September 30, 1918, 4.30 p.m.

Have carried out my instructions. Count Burian was not surprised; attributed the occasion of the proposal to the defection of Bulgaria, Turkey's more difficult situation, and, above all, to the subject of the communication transmitted through Ambassador Prince Hohenlohe.¹ I added that haste was desirable, if we were to resolve to take such a step for these reasons, in order that, in view of the heavy fighting on the western front, further sacrifices should be avoided as far as possible. Count Burian asserted that in principle we could count on the acceptance of our proposal. But he could not, however, give me a formal answer until evening, perhaps not before tomorrow, as he would have to get the consent of the Emperor and, as was demanded by the Constitution, that also of the Premier. Burian expressed some scruples concerning the proposition of holding the conference at Washington. Apart from the technical difficulties that would be caused by the great distance, he feared that the atmosphere would be unfavorable to us. These scruples were not outweighed by the compliment to President Wilson. He thought that we should propose The Hague, and only agree to Washington if it could not be avoided.

WEDEL.

NO. 17

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, September 30, 1918.

The Supreme Army Command requests to be informed of all public announcements of our peace negotiations, in order that it can give prompt information to the Army. Otherwise there will be danger of the growth of demoralization.

LERSNER.

¹ Cf. No. 14, above.

NO. 18

TELEGRAM

BERLIN, *September 30, 1918.*

Minister, Berne.

An immediate official peace proposal to Wilson on the basis of the various points set up by him is under consideration. . . .

Request your opinion immediately whether: 1. If it were transmitted through the Swiss Government, it would be considered a premature indiscretion from the point of view of the Entente; 2. In this case, whether the Swiss Government would take serious offense, if we should not make use of its mediation as the Power in charge of our interests but of that of another neutral Government (Holland, Denmark).

VON STUMM.

NO. 19

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN SECRETARY OF LEGATION DR. JORDAN, BERLIN (FOREIGN OFFICE), AND PRINCE ERBACH AND COUNT WEDEL, VIENNA (GERMAN EMBASSY), OCTOBER 1, 1918

JORDAN: Jordan speaking. His Excellency Stumm instructs me to inform you that it is absolutely necessary to receive not only the acceptance of our proposal in principle, but also the formal reply to it by noon today, at Berlin, as the step is to be taken on this very day. Place of negotiations is of secondary importance. Washington is to be proposed first as a matter of courtesy, without thereby excluding the possibility of some other location being selected. We must receive a reply by noon today in any case. Perhaps the constitutional consent has already been received? Please go to the Ambassador at once about this. I will hold the wire.

WEDEL: The Ambassador, Count Wedel, speaking. The Government consents in principle, but can only give its formal consent to the execution of the proposal when the conditions are known and approved. Count Burian states that he cannot submit with his eyes blinded, inasmuch as he is bound to render an account here. The Government here also intended to make that move over there. Prince Hohenlohe informed him a short time ago that the step was to be taken through an American; he had assumed that it was to be taken through the Powers in charge of our interests. He was convinced that to employ diplomatic secret methods was to run the risk of refusal, or of receiving a very unpleasant reply which would interfere with our internal conditions, unless, of course, we had received assurance on this point from over there. So he must beg to be informed on this point. He also believed that the new Government should put through the step; he is

convinced that the old one would only receive refusal. He requests that Prince Hohenlohe be instructed in detail how the matter is going to be handled, so that he can settle on the attitude to be adopted. Up to that time the government can only agree to the principle, but not to the method of procedure which is unknown to it. Reply is requested.

JORDAN: May I respectfully suggest that you keep the wire open, in order to make it possible, if the occasion arises, to report to Your Excellency immediately upon the views held here. The Secretary of State is going to speak with Prince Hohenlohe right away. Your Excellency will be informed as to the interview. The Secretary of State requests that in the meantime you will take the matter up again with Count Burian.

NO. 20

TELEGRAM

BERLIN, *October 1, 1918.*

Wedel, Vienna.

We have given up the idea of making the *démarche* through an American, and plan to approach President Wilson through the Swiss Government, as the Power in charge of our interests.

As soon as the new Government is formed, the Imperial Minister at Berne will receive the following instructions:

Kindly transmit immediately to the Government to which you are accredited the following note: The Imperial Minister undersigned is instructed and has the honor to request the Government of the Confederation to inform the President of the United States of America by cable that the Imperial Government requests President Wilson to undertake the restoration of peace, and for this purpose to invite plenipotentiaries of all the belligerent nations to Washington. The Imperial Government combines with this request the suggestion to propose to the belligerents the immediate conclusion of a general armistice on all fronts. It declares that it accepts as a basis for the peace negotiations the fourteen points laid down in the message of the President of January 8, and the four guiding principles announced in the message of February 11.

Final settlement of the formalities left to your Excellency. Kindly wire text of note submitted at once and use all means of pressure to induce the Swiss Government to act with all possible speed and to maintain a rigid discretion in the meantime. Wire report of submission and reception.

Your Excellency will inform Count Burian of the text of the note without delay. You will receive prompt notification of the time of putting our *démarche* into execution, in order that our move and that of the Vienna Cabinet shall occur as simultaneously as possible.

HINTZE.

INSISTENCE OF THE SUPREME ARMY COMMAND ON
THE IMMEDIATE DISPATCH OF THE PEACE
PROPOSAL—FIRST GERMAN NOTE, WITH
DOCUMENTS RELATING THERETO
NOS. 21 TO 36

NO. 21

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 1, 1918, 1 p.m.

General Ludendorff has just asked Baron von Grünau and myself in the presence of Colonel Heye *to transmit to Your Excellency his urgent request that our peace proposal shall be issued at once. Today the troops are holding their own; what may happen tomorrow cannot be foreseen.*

I pointed out the fact that it could effect no change in our position, whether our proposal was sent out today or within the next few days. Baron Grünau will likewise wire Your Excellency later as he wishes to consult with His Majesty.

LERSNER.

NO. 22

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 1, 1918, 1.30 p.m.

To Major Baron von dem Bussche
for Vice Chancellor von Payer.

If by seven or eight o'clock tonight it is certain that Prince Max of Baden is going to form the Government, I will agree to the postponement until tomorrow forenoon.

If, on the other hand, the formation of the Government is in any way doubtful, I consider the dispatch of the declaration to the foreign Governments as imperative for tonight.

VON HINDENBURG.

Note delivered October 1, 2 p.m., to His Excellency von Payer.

V. D. BUSSCHE.

NO. 23

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

Confidential.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 1, 1918, 2 p.m.*

General Ludendorff just asked me in the presence of Colonel Heye and Lersner to transmit to Your Excellency his urgent request to issue the peace proposal at once, and *not to hold it back until the formation of the new Government*, which might be delayed.

The troops still held their ground today, and we were in a respectable position, *but the line might be broken at any moment and then our proposal would come at the most unfavorable time. He said he felt like a gambler, and that a division might fail him any where at any time.*

I get the impression that they have all lost their nerve, here, and that, if things come to the worst, we can justify our action to the outside world by Bulgaria's behavior.

GRÜNAU.

NO. 24

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

Urgent.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 1, 1918, 2.35 p.m.*

His Majesty is of the opinion of Your Excellency that the step in question should be taken only by the new Government.

GRÜNAU.

NO. 25

TELEGRAM

BERLIN, *October 1, 1918, 7.20 p.m.*

1. Grüнау.

2. Lersner.

New Government will probably be formed tonight, October 1. So the proposal can also go out tonight. *Military situation is strongest means of pressure on silly and arrogant parties.*

VON HINTZE.

NO. 26

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 1, 1918, 9.45 p.m.

General Ludendorff requests that you inform him as soon as possible of the text of our peace proposal, and when it will go to Wilson. He asks that the peace proposal also be communicated to the other enemy Powers.

The proposal must contain a demand that the enemy determine on a locality for the conduct of armistice negotiations at the front. Armistice commission: General von Beseler, Colonel von Winterfeld, Major Brinckmann, Major von Harbou, a captain, two naval officers, one representative of the Foreign Office, presumably Zeki Pasha and Lieutenant Field Marshal Baron Klepsch.

Should the armistice negotiations commence at once, I should, assuming that Your Excellency agrees to this, go with them as the representative of the Foreign Office, until Your Excellency has appointed a representative.

The Field Marshal will give the credentials to the military, the Imperial Chancellor presumably to the civil members.

LERSNER.

NO. 27

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 1, 1918¹

General Ludendorff told me that our proposal must be forwarded *immediately* from Berne to Washington. *The Army could not wait forty-eight hours longer.* He (word missing, probably "begged") Your Excellency most urgently to make every effort to have the proposal issued in the *quickest possible manner.*

I showed him plainly that notwithstanding the greatest haste the enemy would hardly make a reply in less than a week. The General insisted that *everything depended* on the proposal being in the hands of the Entente by Wednesday night or early Thursday morning at the latest, and begs Your Excellency to leave no stone unturned to that end. He thinks that, in the interest of speed, the note might be sent by the Swiss Government in Swiss cipher to the persons addressed by wireless from Nauen.

LERSNER.

¹ Filed October 2, 12.10 a.m.

NO. 28

STATEMENT BY BARON VON DEM BUSSCHE, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUPREME ARMY COMMAND, TO THE PARTY LEADERS OF THE REICHSTAG ON THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 2, 1918

The military situation before the recent great events has been made known through General Wrisberg. Within a few days it has fundamentally altered.

The collapse of the Bulgarian front entirely upset all of our arrangements. Communication with Constantinople was threatened, as was also the river traffic on the Danube, so indispensable for our supplies. We were compelled, if we did not want to leave the enemy a wholly free hand in the Balkans and to throw open the Black Sea and Roumania, to move in German divisions and Austro-Hungarian divisions intended for the western front. The most rapid of decisions was necessary. Our troops have already begun to dis-entrain. There exists a well-founded hope of restoring the position in the Balkans, as far as it is necessary for our interests; but unfortunately, as I shall explain, not without serious impairment of the position in general.

Almost simultaneously with the Macedonian offensive, tremendous attacks were commenced in the west. They did not find us unprepared. All means of defense against them had been taken. Divisions from the east were on the way for the purpose of relieving experienced western divisions. Unfortunately, part of them had to be diverted to the Balkans. The last man capable of bearing arms was drawn in from the east. We calmly awaited the decisive battle. The Entente was clever in veiling the localities at the front selected for the attacks. Preparations for attack were made from Switzerland to the sea, in their strongest form against Lorraine and the Sundgau. We were compelled to distribute our reserves and to keep the whole front, more or less, in readiness for defense. Considerable forces had to be assigned to Lorraine and to the Sundgau for the protection of German territory.

After the necessary movements had been carried out, we were entirely confident of the victorious outcome of the prospective battles and, owing to the heavy losses which we anticipated inflicting on him, would shatter the enemy's plans for annihilation.

In the end, we were successful in checking the enemy at every point where, by the use of tanks, by surprise attacks or by superiority of numbers, he was enabled to break into our line, and to stop his drive by reserves brought up at the right time. The battles of the last six days have been victorious, despite the loss in prisoners and material. Our opponent has made but little advance in comparison with our gains in the spring offensive. At most points his unusually tenaciously maintained attacks were repelled. According to reports from our troops, he has suffered severe losses.

Our troops—by far the greater proportion—fought excellently and rendered superhuman service. The old heroic spirit has not been lost. The numerical superiority of the enemy did not daunt the army; officer and private soldier vied with each other.

Nevertheless, the Supreme Army Command has had to come to the extremely painful determination that *according to all human calculation, there exists no longer any prospect of compelling the enemy to plead for peace.*

Two factors beyond all others compelled the adoption of this determination:

The tanks. The enemy sent them against us in unexpectedly huge numbers. In places where they appeared unexpectedly after having covered our positions thickly with smoke, the nerve of our soldiers was often no longer capable of withstanding them. In such cases they broke through our first line, paved the way for their own infantry, appeared in our rear, caused local panics and shattered our battle formations. When their presence became recognized, our anti-tank weapons and our artillery soon finished them. But by then the mischief had been done, and the great loss in captured men, which has so grievously reduced our strength and has caused the more than ordinarily rapid consumption of our reserves, can be attributed to the success of the tanks.

We were not a position to oppose the enemy with an equivalent number of German tanks. To produce them was beyond the power of our industries, already tried to the utmost, or else other and more important business would have had to be neglected.

The question of reserves, also, is conclusive. The Army entered the great battle with very weak support. In spite of all precautions, the strength of our battalions fell by the end of September from an average of 800 men to an average of 540. Even this last number was only maintainable through the breaking-up of twenty-two infantry divisions—sixty-six infantry regiments.

The Bulgarian overthrow used up seven more divisions. There is no prospect of being able further to increase our strength. The available reinforcements consisting of the disabled men who have recovered, the extra men combed out of civil life, will not even make up for the losses of a quiet winter campaign. Only the utilization of the annual draft of the men of 1900 will raise our battalion strength by one hundred files. Then our final reserve of men will have been used up.

The losses in the battle now in progress have, as we have said, been beyond all expectation, especially as regards officers. This is decisive. The Army requires more than ever the example of its officers, be it in defense or in attack. The officers have had to go in and sacrifice themselves and have done so without reserve. Regimental commanders and higher chiefs fought in the front lines. Let me give but one example: One division lost, dead or

wounded, its whole outfit of officers in two days of fighting, with three regimental commanders killed. The small corps of active officers that still exists has shrunk to almost negligible proportions. The reconstruction of the divisions which come out of the great battle is now hardly feasible. All that applies to the officers' corps applies equally to the corps of non-commissioned officers. *The enemy is enabled to make good his losses through the assistance of America.* The American troops, as such, are not of any particular value or in any way superior to our own. Where they have gained preliminary successes by mass-attacks, they have been held back despite their numerical superiority. An important factor, however, has been that they could take over long stretches of the front and thereby enable the English and the French to relieve their own war-trained troops and to acquire almost inexhaustible reserves.

Up to the present, our reserves have sufficed to fill up the gaps. The railroads brought them up at the right time. Severe attacks have been repulsed in an unprecedented manner. The fighting is described as having been heavier than that hitherto experienced. But now our reserves are coming to an end. If the enemy should attack again, our situation might demand that we retire along wide stretches of the front. In this way we can carry on the struggle for an appreciable time yet, can cause severe losses to the enemy; we can, however, no longer win.

This conviction and these events have caused the General Field Marshal and General Ludendorff to arrive at the determination to propose to His Majesty the Emperor that an attempt be made to put an end to the struggle in order to save the German people and their allies from making further sacrifices.

Just as our great offensive of July 15 was immediately halted when the advantages of its prosecution lost all proportion to the sacrifices it would have entailed, so now the decision should be made to put an end to the prosecution of the war as being useless. There is still time to accomplish this. The German Army is still strong enough to stand against its opponent for months to come, to achieve local successes and to exact new sacrifices from the Entente. But each day brings our opponent nearer to his goal, and will make him less inclined to conclude with us a peace which is tolerable.

Therefore, no time must be lost. Every twenty-four hours can impair the situation and give our opponent the opportunity of clearly realizing our present weakness.

That might have the most unhappy consequences both for the prospect of peace and for the military situation.

Neither nation nor Army must do anything which would make our weakness apparent. On the contrary, both nation and Army must stick together closer than ever before. Simultaneously with the proposal of peace, a firm stand must be adopted by the nation, which will offer evidence that a firm

will to carry on the war exists, if the enemy will grant us no peace, or a peace only under humiliating conditions.

In such an event, the endurance of the Army would decidedly depend on the firm attitude of the country and on the spirit which is impressed on the Army by the country.

NO. 29

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION FROM GENERAL LUDENDORFF
TO VICE CHANCELOR VON PAYER¹

All I know of the contents of the proposed peace note is "that the fourteen points of Wilson's note are supposed to serve as the basis for the peace discussions, but are not supposed to count as conditions imposed by the enemy."

Thus far I have announced my agreement. But since it has been said that the Supreme Army Command has agreed to the entire contents of the note, I request communication of the note before it is issued, in order that I may know what attitude to adopt.

NO. 30

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN COUNSELOR OF LEGATION VON LERSNER (GENERAL HEADQUARTERS) AND SECRETARY OF LEGATION DR. JORDAN (FOREIGN OFFICE), OCTOBER 2, 1918, 2.40 P.M.

This is Counselor of Legation von Lersner speaking. Please get Secretary of Legation Dr. Jordan to the telephone immediately. Urgent. *General Ludendorff proposes the following text:*

The German Government requests the President of the United States to take steps for the restoration of peace and to invite for this purpose plenipotentiaries of all the belligerents.

It agrees that the points of the program laid down by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and in his subsequent pronouncements, serve as a basis for the peace negotiations.

The German Government furthermore proposes the conclusion of a general armistice on land, on water and in the air, and requests the President of the United States to bring about the armistice at once in order to avoid further bloodshed.

¹ Received by Baron von dem Bussche on October 2, 1918, 12.20 p.m.

General Ludendorff asks further:

1. Why are Austria-Hungary and Turkey not (word missing) ?
2. The Supreme Army Command presumes that it is only President Wilson's familiar fourteen plus four points that are in question.

LERSNER.

NO. 31

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 3, 1918.*

General Ludendorff requests the communication of our peace note.

LERSNER.

NO. 32

TELEGRAM

Urgent.

BERLIN, *October 3, 1918.*

Before I make up my mind to inaugurate the peace move desired by the Supreme Army Command, I have the honor to request Your Excellency's point of view as to the following questions:

1. How long can the Army hold the enemy on the other side of the German border?

2. Does the Supreme Army Command expect a military collapse, and, if such is the case, at what time? Would the collapse mean the finish of our power to defend ourselves?

3. Is the military situation so critical that action for the purpose of bringing about an armistice and peace must be inaugurated at once?

4. In case question number 3 is answered in the affirmative, does the Supreme Army Command realize that the inauguration of a peace move under the pressure of a critical military situation might result in the loss of the German colonies and of German territory, such as Alsace-Lorraine and the purely Polish districts of the Eastern Provinces?

5. Does the Supreme Army Command agree to the enclosed draft of the note?

I should be grateful to Your Excellency for an immediate reply.

Prince MAX,
Imperial Chancellor.

To His Excellency the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army,
General Field Marshal von Hindenburg,
City.

NO. 33

Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army to the Imperial Chancellor

BERLIN, October 3, 1918.

The Supreme Army Command persists in its request of Sunday, September 29, of this year, urging the immediate dispatch to our enemies of the peace proposal.

As a result of the collapse of the Macedonian front, entailing the weakening of our reserves in the west, and as a result of the impossibility of making good the very considerable losses sustained in the battles of the last few days, there exists, according to all human calculation, no further prospect of compelling the enemy to sue for peace.

Our opponents, for their part, can continuously bring new and fresh reserves into battle.

The German Army is still firm and in good order, and is victoriously repulsing all attacks. *But the situation is daily growing more acute, and may force the Supreme Army Command to very serious decisions.*

Under these circumstances it is imperative to bring the struggle to an end in order to spare the German people and their allies useless sacrifice. *Every day's delay costs the lives of thousands of brave soldiers.*

VON HINDENBURG,
General Field Marshal.

NO. 34

FIRST GERMAN NOTE TO PRESIDENT WILSON, ON OCTOBER
3, 1918

The German Government requests the President of the United States of America to take steps for the restoration of peace, to notify all belligerents of this request, and to invite them to delegate plenipotentiaries for the purpose of taking up negotiations. The German Government accepts, as a basis for the peace negotiations, the program laid down by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and in his subsequent pronouncements, particularly in his address of September 27, 1918.

In order to avoid further bloodshed the German Government requests to bring about the immediate conclusion of an armistice on land, on water, and in the air.

MAX,
Prince of Baden, Imperial Chancellor.

NO. 35

CONFERENCE AT THE OFFICE OF THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR

Extract

BERLIN, October 6, 1918.

Present:

Imperial Chancellor,
Count Roedern,
von Payer,
Erzberger,
Groeber,
Scheidemann,
Solf,
Radowitz,
Deutelmoser,
Lewald.

DISCUSSION OF THE NOTE

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I fought against the note. First, because I thought the time premature; secondly, because I wished to turn to the enemy in general.

Now we must quietly consider the consequences. Now—

1. The situation at the front must be determined, and that through experienced officers;

2. Ambassadorial conference. The best minds must be heard on England and America.

SOLF: Haeften¹ states that *Ludendorff looks upon the establishment of a commission as lack of confidence in himself*, and says that, if it be done, he would hand in his resignation. That would entail the resignation of Hindenburg.

ROEDERN thinks that Ludendorff's suspicions could be avoided.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: *The leaders of the Army must be heard.* He hoped by a talk with His Majesty to find a way to do it.

PAYER: It is necessary to find a way. We must hear other people beside Ludendorff. Ludendorff's nerves are no longer reliable.

SOLF and ERZBERGER of the same opinion.

(The discussion of other questions ensues.)

¹ Representative of the Supreme Army Command at the Foreign Office and attached to the Imperial Chancellor.

BERLIN, *October 8, 1918.*

To General Ludendorff, City.

The reply of the President of the United States of America to our request for peace and an armistice will presumably consist neither in a plain acceptance nor a plain refusal, but will set conditions on which the President will make his procedure depend.

We must figure on the possibility that these conditions will be severe. We shall also have to face the question whether our military situation will permit us to strive through negotiations for an amelioration of the conditions, with the dangerous prospect that several weeks will elapse during their progress. Austria-Hungary and Turkey may desert us, and we may finally have to accept the President's conditions in their original form.

In order that I may be able to form a correct idea of our military situation, I should be grateful to Your Excellency for immediate replies to the following questions:¹

1. How long will the Army be able to hold the enemy on the other side of the German border, either by remaining in its present positions or by a gradual retirement?

2. Is it true today that we must reckon on a military collapse before spring, and in case it is true, does this danger threaten us during the next three or four weeks?

3. How long is the present critical state of affairs likely to last? Will the danger point be passed when the enemy finds himself compelled to cease from his big attacks, and when will this probably occur?

4. Can a consolidation of our front be counted on after the danger point has been passed, and by what means can it be accomplished?

5. What is the status of the reserve supplies of men and materials?

6. Can we carry on the war alone until spring, despite the defection of one of the two allies yet remaining to us, in case of the failure of the present peace move?

7. Does the Supreme Army Command see any promise of a sufficient strengthening of the forces in the *levée en masse* as recommended by Walther Rathenau in the *Vossische Zeitung*?

According to the news that has already been received, it seems possible that President Wilson may demand the evacuation of Belgium and northern France as a preliminary condition of entering into negotiations; therefore the further questions arise:

1. Would the Supreme Army Command advise that we accept such demands unconditionally, or that we reply to them with counter-demands? In case the military situation admits of a delay for the purpose of negotiations under the conditions referred to above, we might introduce the following counter conditions:

¹ For reply see Nos. 38 and 43.

(a) The evacuation of the districts of upper Alsace occupied by France and England (possibly of the German colonies, also).

(b) Guaranties to be given that the enemy would not pursue us. It might even be demanded that the French territory evacuated by us should be occupied by American troops only, and that Belgium should only be entered by Belgian troops, that its neutrality should be observed by all belligerents, and that Belgian territory should not again be turned into a theater of war.

(c) A declaration on our part that, in order to make up for the injury to our strategic position in the west, we should have to recall our troops from the territories in the east occupied by us (the Baltic Provinces, Lithuania, Poland and the Ukraine), which would expose these territories to Bolshevism.

2. Within how long a time could the evacuation of northern France and Belgium be carried out, if it commenced with the signing of the armistice?

3. Would we be in a condition to hold the Franco-German border with the troops we should still have at our disposal after the armistice, if in their further course the peace negotiations should fall through and our opponents should start a new attack?

President Wilson might demand the occupation of German fortresses on our western frontier, on the ground that he required security:

1. In view of the military situation, should we be compelled to comply with such a demand?

2. To what extent could the acceptance of conditions be made dependent on counter-conditions?

MAX,
Prince of Baden, Imperial Chancellor.

FROM WILSON'S REPLY TO THE ANSWER THERETO NOS. 37 TO 47

NO. 37

WILSON'S FIRST REPLY¹

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *October 8, 1918.*

SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge, on behalf of the President, your note of October 6, enclosing a communication from the German Government to the President; and I am instructed by the President to request you to make the following communication to the Imperial German Chancellor:

Before making reply to the request of the Imperial German Government, and in order that that reply shall be as candid and straightforward as the momentous interests involved require, the President of the United States deems it necessary to assure himself of the exact meaning of the note of the Imperial Chancellor.

Does the Imperial Chancellor mean that the Imperial German Government accepts the terms laid down by the President in his address to the Congress of the United States on the eighth of January last and in subsequent addresses, and that its object in entering into discussions would be only to agree upon the practical details of their application?

The President feels bound to say with regard to the suggestion of an armistice that he would not feel at liberty² to propose a cessation of arms to the governments with which the Government of the United States is associated against the Central Powers so long as the armies of those³ Powers are upon their soil. The good faith of any discussion would manifestly⁴ depend upon the consent of the Central Powers immediately to withdraw their forces everywhere from invaded territory.

The President also feels that he is justified in asking whether the Imperial Chancellor is speaking merely for the constituted⁵ authorities of the Empire who have so far conducted the war. He deems the answers to these questions⁶ vital from every point of view.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

ROBERT LANSING.

¹ Official English text, showing deviations in the retranslation from the German.

² Retranslation: "justified."

³ Retranslation: "these."

⁴ Retranslation: "on the other hand."

⁵ Retranslation: "those."

⁶ Retranslation: "answer to this question."

NO. 38

CONFERENCE AT THE OFFICE OF THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR

*Extract*BERLIN, *October 9, 1918.*

Present:

Imperial Chancellor,	Count Roedern,
Von Payer,	Lewald,
Ludendorff,	Scheidemann,
Scheüch,	Groeber,
Heye,	Erzberger,
Von Haeften,	Von Radowitz,
Von Winterfeld,	Deutelmoser,
Von Hintze,	Friedberg.
Solf,	

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR greets General Ludendorff.

Subject of Conference: Reply to Wilson.

LUDENDORFF: War in 1914 brought about difficult situation. Great enemy superiority. In 1916, when Hindenburg and Ludendorff were appointed position was particularly difficult because of Roumania's entrance into war. Strong forces were tied down by war in the east. Battle of the Somme also in progress at that time. Lack of ammunition. Therefore, great efforts made, situation eased. Hindenburg program. Increased demand for labor and recruits. Length of service extended further. Auxiliary service law.

1916 came to an end with assurance of great enemy superiority in east and west. Anxiety very great. Sole means of holding the western front was U-Boat war. Field Marshal and Ludendorff supported it on that account. Further withdrawal of front. April, May, battle of Arras. Great losses, but successful repulse. Russia's collapse then made it possible for us to give direct support to Austria-Hungary which threatened to collapse in twelfth Isonzo battle. Possibility of offensive also on western front. But first had to free the rear in the east. To prevent formation of English-Bolshevik Entente front. Homburg conference. Advance far up north (Finland) to keep England away from Petersburg. Scarcity of provisions also. Compelled to go far east. Ukraine supplied valuable raw materials, delayed formation of Bolshevik front. Spring, 205 divisions in the west, 32 in the east, latter not capable fighting material. Front line in the east very thin. Command in east no longer sure of being able to keep Bolshevism out of occupied territories.

What is to be done in the west? In spring we had superiority of twenty to twenty-five divisions; offensive necessary to hold our allies and

to win a victory, if possible, in the west before the arrival of the American masses.

Peace proposal not then under consideration. *Offensive was to make opponent ready to accept peace.* The same in June. Hope remained unfulfilled.

Reasons: Use of tanks in *great numbers*, influenza, potato famine at home. *Up to August 8 war situation good, nevertheless.* Then, however, six or seven divisions broken up in the fog, within two or three hours. Grievous break in line. Further stubborn attacks. During the last few months we suffered the shortage of 70,000 men a month. *Greatest bravery on part of both officers and men. Reports rouse deepest feeling.* Great question, whether possible to get reinforcements. April and May, Supreme Army Command requested greater reinforcements. Conference in August on same point. Nothing definite resulted, however. If it is still possible, Minister of War must know. *Reserves of material are assured, but men are lacking. Tank attacks very dangerous.* Since August 8, Supreme Army Command has informed Imperial Chancellor it is no longer capable of bringing the war to an actual end by military blow which would make enemy willing to make peace. *Beginning of September neutral mediation for peace suggested by Supreme Army Command.* Then came collapse of Bulgaria.

Even as late as June brilliant impression created by Bulgarians. Ignorance of language increases difficulty of getting at Bulgarian temperament. Scholtz has done much for Bulgarian army. But Bulgarian generals got rid of Radoslavoff and goaded on army. Government then turned to Entente. Bulgarian Supreme Army Command refused dismissal of inefficient division commanders. We turned aside five divisions to cover southeast front of Austria-Hungary. Entente can make swing through Bulgaria against Kospoli. Turks gathering at Tchataldja. We had reinforcements come from Roumania. Turkey will drop out. We will be able to hold southeast front of the Monarchy. Are not in condition, however, to protect Danube and Roumania. Roumania can not be held with forces at our disposal there. *How great should the Bolshevik danger be estimated? That depends on whether we can give up the Ukraine,* in order to shorten front and free a few divisions for the Danube. Roumania cannot be held militarily with our present forces against an advance from the south. Only the Sereth line can be held there. Nothing but old men there. If we want to hold Roumania, we must know how great the Bolshevik danger is to be estimated. We could bring a few divisions to Roumania from the Ukraine, but then we should have no more military protection against Bolshevism. Not probable that more than four or five divisions can be brought from the east to the west.

In the west the lack of troops decisive. Situation serious. Yesterday a bad day. English broke in at St. Quentin. All the Entente plans not

successful; cavalry corps which was held in readiness, did not deploy. We had to retire, however. The divisions are no longer capable of good fighting. (Explains on map.)

We prefer to retire rather than to be beaten. We are concentrating more and more. Imperial Chancellor has put questions (refers to Imperial Chancellor's letter of October 8, 1918)¹. It is difficult to reply to such questions, and I can only answer them in conformity with my duty as follows:

Question 1: As regards the frontier at a distance from the west front, we can protect it for a long time. Attacks in Lorraine possible, but I see no danger to the Lorraine frontier. There is no danger I can see from Holland, as such troops as might cross the border would be interned.

Question 2: There is always danger of a break through. The English might have broken through at the first tank attack.

Question 3: Yes, only big attacks are dangerous.

Question 4: We lack 70,000 men a month. There is plenty of material.

Question 5: We need an interval for the purpose; then we could consolidate.

Question 7: No. In spite of the lack of men, I can see no advantage in a *levée en masse*. We always wanted to increase the labor service. I can not judge whether slackers can be got hold of. In the opinion of the Supreme Army Command the *Gv.*² system should stop; the *Gv.* men will not fight now. We could get more men by taking more stringent measures at home. *A levée en masse would cause more disturbance than we could afford.*

Question: *Should other generals be heard also?* Should be glad to be relieved of the responsibility, but am certain that other leaders think as I do. *I have discussed the peace move with Kuhl, Lossberg, Schulenberg. They all agreed.* It was hard for us to decide on it, but we recognized our duty and did not hesitate. Commission is unnecessary. The Supreme Army Command can also carry this responsibility alone.

COLONEL HEYE: I have belonged to the Supreme Army Command for the last four weeks. Believe that, under the conditions of the reserve situation, we can no longer count on carrying on the war successfully. It will be gambling with fate on the part of the Supreme Army Command, if it does not press forward the peace move. We may be able to hold out until spring. *But a turn for the worse may come any day. Yesterday the question of a break through our lines hung on a thread.*

Earnestly beg that you do not talk about nervousness. *Move for peace is absolutely necessary, still more one for an armistice. The troops no longer get any rest.* It is impossible to foresee whether the troops will hold out or not. There are new surprises every day. I do not fear a catastrophe, but I want

¹ No. 36, above.

² [*Gv.*, an abbreviation for *Garnisonsverwendungsfähig* (fit for garrison duty).]

to save the Army, so that we can use it as a means of pressure during the peace negotiations.

Army needs rest. If it gets it and receives fresh recruits, it will be able to show fresh achievements.

LUDENDORFF: Defense is more costly than attack. On May 27, we lost from 60,000 to 70,000 men in the offensive, but captured just as many prisoners. Enemy's other losses must be added to that. Thus the balance was in our favor.

In regard to the question of evacuation:

We have an enormous mass of material in the occupied territories. Roughly, evacuation would take two or three months if accomplished on the march (*longer* by transport). Army would have to remain ready to fight, so could only retire by sections. Once on the frontier, it could repulse every hostile attack. Only dubious question would be danger to industrial regions from air forces. Hence we must try to arrange that only Belgian troops should follow into Belgium. A demand to evacuate Metz would infringe on our military honor.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Should negotiations with Entente break up if French or English troops also should follow into Belgium?

LUDENDORFF: No.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: How does the matter stand with regard to the evacuation of the German territory occupied by the enemy?

LUDENDORFF: Depends on the situation at the front.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Equally in case of an armistice or a suspension of hostilities?

LUDENDORFF: Armistice. Question concerning Bolshevism: It would be wise to exercise that pressure on that account.

Final question: From two to three months.

We are in a position to be able to hold the frontier. *We can not surrender German fortresses.* We must make counter-demands.

ROEDERN: Concerning the question of the danger period: Is the weather condition such that the enemy would have to cease big attacks in winter?

LUDENDORFF: Winter battles are possible. Weather conditions alone are no obstacle, but exhaustion is.

ERZBERGER: Is the Entente in a superior position as regards material?

LUDENDORFF: Tanks, yes, also superior in motor trucks. We hope to have 600 tanks by spring. Do not believe their superiority of supplies in other ways dangerous.

SCHEIDEMANN: What is the morale of the Army? Divisional commands of the 41st Division.

LUDENDORFF: August 8 was a black day in history. It was a blow to leadership. Army had influenza, no potatoes. Sustenance was poor, morale at the time poor, now improved. At that time troops were brought

up from the lines of communication. *Gv.* men lost their spirit, hence there were many captured. Now we feel there is a better spirit.

ROEDERN: If it is doubtful whether we can hold the Danube front, then there is danger that the oil supply will cease. What supply is there on hand?

LUDENDORFF: For the Navy enough for ten months, *for the Army, for airplanes, for two months.*

ERZBERGER: Are the 70,000 men lacking also necessary in the winter months?

LUDENDORFF: We need them to put new life into the divisions.

SCHEÜCH: Reinforcement possibilities. In the fall the Supreme Army Command required 200,000 men at one time, and 140,000 men a month. To meet this demand the following are available: Men recovering from wounds, 60,000 a month, returned prisoners, etc., 50,000 in all, 250,000 of the 1900 class, who are in part, however, required in industries.

LUDENDORFF: The morale of reinforcements is not good in some cases.

SCHEÜCH: The country will be combed over once more. Commissions will get hold of at least 60,000 in six months; likewise 40,000 from rest-quarters. Thinning out of industries very difficult. From postal and railway service 20,000 will be taken. Supplementary recruiting and Germans from abroad, 5,000; total, 950,000. Hence a deficiency compared with the requirements of the Supreme Army Command. Ministry of War investigating possibilities.

1. Raising of labor efficiency. This has been reduced to 70 per cent at the best. Improvement can only be reached by food. Attempt to be made by assignment of sustenance supplies to industries.

2. We are going after slackers by every method of checking-up. Have already carefully combed out munition works. Always possible to be deceived, but hope to bring the number down.

3. To abolish the *Gv.* system would be dangerous—would bring poor material to the front. Physical requirements have already been relaxed. To alter them would be dangerous.

SCHEÜCH: *Levée en masse.* Every man must serve, every woman must work. Auxiliary Service Law sufficient to make sure that every man works. In the spring extension of service age to sixty years was proposed. It would have a minimum result. Rathenau objected strongly to this procedure. He wants a great volunteer army. I believe that this plan, too, would not be effective.

LUDENDORFF: In reply to Erzberger's question: The 70,000 men per month are reckoned without consideration of the enemy's increase of strength. We need something to inspire the national ardor.

DEUTELMOSER.

NO. 39
CONFERENCEBERLIN, *October 10, 1918.**Extract*

PAYER: Stresemann has suggested making inquiries of other Army leaders besides the Supreme Army Command, in connection with the evacuation question.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I received a letter to the same effect.

PAYER: Ludendorff's statements of yesterday must be verified, particularly the statement regarding questioning of Kuhl, Lossberg and Schulenburg.

ERZBERGER: Communicate Stresemann's letter to Ludendorff. Letters from General Hoffmann are circulating in Berlin, according to which the western front can be held. This matter must be cleared up. He was Chief of the General Staff at Tannenberg. Many people believe Hoffmann's judgment to be better than that of Ludendorff; let Ludendorff therefore be asked to have Hoffmann's opinion.

SOLF and ROEDERN: Then Ludendorff would resign; better have Hoffmann come privately.

(Text of the note is explained in the succeeding discussion):

SOLF: Note is divided in three parts.

Part 1: Yes.

Part 2: We reached no conclusion yesterday. *I asked Ludendorff if he could hold the front for three months more. Ludendorff said No.* Therefore we will have to agree to principle of evacuation.

Part 3 will be easy to answer.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Does the Foreign Office take the position that we should evacuate without any counter-demands?

SOLF: No. We will leave that to the negotiations.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: There must be nothing in the note to complicate matters.

NO. 40
TELEGRAMBERLIN, *October 11, 1918.*

To Berckheim,

General Headquarters.

Kindly communicate at once to the Supreme Army Command the following draft of the note in reply to Wilson, and forward their agreement to the third paragraph immediately by telephone and in writing.

In reply to the question of the President of the United States of America, the German Government hereby declares:

The German Government has accepted all conditions laid down by President Wilson in his address of January the eighth and in his subsequent addresses as the foundation of a permanent peace of justice. After entering upon the negotiations it will only discuss the details of its practical application.

The German Government in accordance with the Austro-Hungarian Government declares itself ready to evacuate immediately the territory of the Powers associated with the United States. Furthermore, both Governments agree to withdraw their troops from other occupied territory at any time.

The German Government leaves it to the President to bring about the meeting of a mixed commission of the participating Powers whose duty it would be to make the necessary arrangements concerning the evacuation.

The present German Government which has undertaken the responsibility for this step toward peace has been formed by conferences and in agreement with the great majority of the Reichstag. The Chancellor, supported in all of his actions by the will of this majority, speaks in the name of the German people.

SOLF.

NO. 41

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Secretary of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 11, 1918.*

The General Field Marshal lays aside his scruples as to your second proposed note of reply to Wilson. The draft approved by the Field Marshal follows for Your Excellency's information. The Field Marshal lays great stress on the first sentence of this draft, and also on the plan of having the peace negotiations commence *at once*, in order not to have to surrender to the enemy just on our own border. The Field Marshal's draft reads as follows:

The German Government believes that the other Governments participating, also accept the position taken by President Wilson in his addresses, and that the negotiations will begin without delay.

On this assumption, the German Government in conjunction with the Austro-Hungarian Government declares itself prepared in principle to evacuate the territory of the Powers associated with the United States. It assumes further that, for reasons of humanity and in the interest of the people of the territories to be evacuated, as well as out of regard for the valuable property that is involved, a suspension of arms shall take place at the commencement of the evacuation. In

order to avoid misunderstandings, it would call to mind the fact that an orderly evacuation is a matter of weeks. The German Government leaves it to the President to bring about the meeting of a commission of the participating Powers whose duty it shall be to make the necessary arrangements for the armistice and for the evacuation.

In the interest of the population, an evacuation of the occupied territories of the former Russian Empire is at the present time impossible, in view of the uncertainty of local conditions. It will, however, be carried out according to the desire of the people, by mutual agreement. The German Government does not object in principle to the evacuation of Roumania.

BERCKHEIM.

NO. 42

CONFERENCE ON THE 11TH OF OCTOBER, 1918

Present:

Imperial Chancellor Prince Max von Baden,

Vice Chancellor von Payer,

Minister of War Scheüch,

Secretary of State Baron von Mann,

“ Baron von Stein,

“ Bauer,

“ Trimborn,

“ Dr. von Krause,

“ Rüdlin,

“ Dr. Solf,

“ Count Roedern,

“ Dr. Friedberg, also as representative of the National
Liberal Party,

“ Groeber,

“ Scheidemann,

“ Erzberger,

Under-Secretary of State Dr. Lewald,

“ von Stumm,

“ Wahnschaffe,

Ministerial Director Deutmoser,

Colonel von Haefen.

Dr. SOLF reads the new draft of the text of the note in reply.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR reads Wilson's note and explains it. The Supreme Army Command has taken a determined stand for peace; it wants us to give our consent to the evacuation.

Dr. SOLF says that it is necessary for all the Secretaries of State to give their express consent.

Baron VON STEIN says that he can do that only if all the deliberations, particularly the declarations of the military authorities, are made known.

SCHEÜCH, requested to give his opinion as to the military situation, thinks that it would be impossible for him to do so.

VON HAEFTEN announces that *General Ludendorff agrees to the draft of the note*, but desires to put the words "*proposal for evacuation*" in place of "*demand for evacuation*."

DEUTELMOSER reads over Colonel Heye's statement at the conference of October 9, and His Excellency Ludendorff's agreement thereto.

VON HAEFTEN thinks that His Excellency Ludendorff did not consider the situation quite as threatening as did Colonel Heye.

Imperial Chancellor PRINCE MAX VON BADEN replies to this as follows: On the evening of the 1st of October he was offered the post of Imperial Chancellor and simultaneously requested to seek at once the peace mediation of Wilson; *he objected to this and wished to wait at least a week, in order to consolidate the new Government and not to create the impression that we were making our plea for peace mediation under the pressure of a military collapse*. On the same evening a conference took place between himself and Field Marshal von Hindenburg, von Berg, von Payer and von Hintze. In the course of this conference, *he had several times sent telephone messages to the Supreme Army Command at General Headquarters, asking whether it was not possible to delay the dispatch of the note*. In response he had received from General Ludendorff the reply by telephone that if he, the Prince, was not Imperial Chancellor by ten o'clock on the following morning, it would be better for Vice Chancellor von Payer *to sign the note that very evening*. The Supreme Army Command and Secretary of State von Hintze had put through the dispatch of note to America against his doubts on the subject, which were likewise shared by von Payer and Solf. The pressure exercised by the Supreme Army Command at that time had been intense. In the note now to be drafted the consequences of that first step had to be dealt with. Perhaps the Supreme Army Command was a little less disturbed at the present time, but it was nevertheless firmly insisting on the demand for an *immediate armistice*.

VON HAEFTEN, when questioned, stated that this presentation of the situation was correct, but that he could no longer remember the exact words of General Ludendorff's telephone message in reply to the inquiry of the Prince.

VON PAYER supplements him by saying that the telephone message was that if Prince Max was to become Imperial Chancellor by seven o'clock that evening, the matter *might be delayed until ten o'clock the next morning*, otherwise the note should be signed with his, von Payer's, signature, and sent off at once.

Dr. SOLF: He had also asked Field Marshal von Hindenburg if we could not wait a week or at least four days. The Field Marshal had replied that he could make no definite answer to that, and had closed his remarks with the words: *Hurry up, hurry up!*

VON HAEFTEN: The telephone message has been correctly repeated by Mr. von Payer. General Ludendorff thought that we might be able to hold out for perhaps two weeks longer, but that the crisis might come then, and that a delay of four days would therefore be considerable. Also at General Headquarters they did not sufficiently appreciate the difficulties of forming a new government.

VON PAYER: The telephone message was by no means the only pressure brought to bear.

(Discussion of other questions followed.)

NO. 43

TELEGRAM

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 11, 1918.*

To Colonel von Haeften,
Berlin.

In reply to the letter of the Imperial Chancellor of October 8, 1918,¹ I have the honor to submit the following:

Page 1,² to 1: The Rhine Province can be held for some time to come, as it is situated at some distance from our present positions. An attack on Alsace-Lorraine is on the other hand possible at any moment, although not probable just at present.

Page 1,² to 2: The danger of a collapse has always existed. I do not fear one. It is possible, however.

Page 2,² to 3: We can count on big attacks for several weeks yet. When the enemy ceases making them, we shall have passed the danger point.

Page 2,² to 4: Yes, by withdrawing the reserves. There is a possibility of rest for a great part of the Army on the western front by bringing all available reinforcements into the service (enlistment of the draft of 1900).

Page 2,² to 5: The monthly deficit in man power which is not made good, amounts to 70,000 men at least. Our reserves of material are sufficient.

Page 2,² to 6: If a pause in the fighting on the western front should occur, yes.

Page 2,² to 7: A *levée en masse* would not afford a sufficient increase to our strength, but energetic measures for increasing the efficiency of labor and for securing the still actually available material, would.

¹ No. 36, above.

² [This print, p. 50.]

Page 3,¹ to 1: No unconditional acceptance, but counter-demands.

to 1 (a): Yes.

to 1 (b): Some line of demarcation must be determined on. The neutrality of Belgium must be assured.

to 1 (c): That declaration can be made.

Page 3,² to 2: Within 2 or 3 months. The evacuation must take place by sectors.

Page 3,² to 3: If the frontier should at once be fortified, yes.

Page 4,² to 1: No.

LUDENDORFF.

October 11, 1918, 10 p.m.

NO. 44

CONFERENCE OF OCTOBER 12, 1918

Extract

Present:

The Imperial Chancellor,

His Excellency von Payer,

" " Count Roedern,

" " Von Krause,

" " Baron von Stein,

" " Dr. Solf,

" " Baron von Mann,

" " Rüdlin,

" " Groeber,

" " Erzberger,

" " Friedberg, also as representative of the National Liberal Party,

" " Scheüch,

Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe,

" " Lewald,

" " Von Stumm,

Colonel von Haeften,

Ministerial Director Deutelmoser.

Colonel VON HAEFTEN announced the desire of the Field Marshal that the condition should be made that the allies of America also accept the fourteen points. He sees therein a renewed assurance against more extensive demands on the part of the Entente.

Colonel VON HAEFTEN mentions that during the night Field Marshal

¹[This print pp. 50-1.]

²[This print, p. 51.]

von Hindenburg had again requested that the additional clause recommended by him be appended. Secretaries of State von Krause and Count Roedern approved of this, likewise Secretary of State Erzberger.

Colonel VON HAEFTEN proposed the following wording:

The German Government believes that the other governments of the Allies also accept the position taken by the President in his addresses.

Secretaries of State SOLF, VON KRAUSE, ERZBERGER declare this form to be acceptable.

His Excellency Dr. SOLF again reads the text of the note with the addition suggested by the Supreme Army Command.

To the inquiry of the IMPERIAL CHANCELOR as to whether all the gentlemen were in agreement, it is stated by

Baron VON MANN, that he agrees, although he is in doubt as to whether Wilson is acting as an idealist or as a trust magnate; but the military situation is conclusive. From the naval point of view, a great deal would be sacrificed by retirement and an armistice (the discontinuance of the U-Boat war, 500,000 tons a month, the possible occupation of Holland, of the Scheldt by England, the threat to Wilhelmshaven). *Ludendorff's opinion, however, was conclusive.* He accepts the wording of the note.

His Excellency VON PAYER: Is the Supreme Army Command now in agreement?

Colonel VON HAEFTEN states that he believes so. He will take the necessary steps to make certain at once.

His Excellency Count ROEDERN points out that the Field Marshal must agree positively, not merely waive his objections.

NO. 45

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR IMPERIAL NAVAL OFFICE.

BERLIN, *Oktober 12, 1918.*

I have the honor of submitting to Your Excellency the accompanying written statement regarding the position taken by me at the meeting of the Secretaries of State on October 12, with respect to the proposed note of reply to the President.

MANN.

Berlin, October 12, 1918.

To His Excellency Dr. Solf,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, City

Written Statement

Today the conference relative to the note of reply to President Wilson was continued and completed. After General Ludendorff had stated that

the Army might be cut through, that to hold the western front any longer would be gambling, and that the Army had to have rest in order to recover; after General Field Marshal von Hindenburg, furthermore, had declared himself to be satisfied with the text of the note and only asked the addition of a supplementary clause, which was also accepted, I made the following statement at the conference of the Secretaries of State:

It is with a heavy heart that I give my consent to the reply, after the highest military authorities have described the situation of the Army as they have done. It is quite evident to me that by this answer we put ourselves entirely into the hands of Wilson—be it into those of an idealistic Wilson, benefactor of nations, who will become the greatest man of the century through the bringing about of a just and permanent peace, or into those of a Wilson who at the head of the trust magnates and the great capitalistic groups will throttle us economically; I do not know. If the latter should be the case, we should—as was discussed yesterday—have the right to continue to fight after having retired to the German border. But whether we have the power to continue the struggle successfully is another question. I am far from wishing to criticize Ludendorff's view that the German frontier could be held. I merely wish to point out, however, so far as the Navy is concerned, the dangers that threaten the German industrial districts from hostile cannon and airplanes; also the danger to which the U-Boat base at Emden and the naval base at Wilhelmshaven will be exposed if the Entente penetrates into the Scheldt through Holland. We have evacuated Antwerp. Besides that in the event that the peace negotiations may later be broken off, we are giving the Entente an enormous advantage by the discontinuance of the U-Boat war. That means for us a decline in ship-sinkings of from 400,000 to 500,000 tons a month. By this we unquestionably blunt the edge of the only offensive weapon which we still possess and which might lead to a favorable peace. *After bringing forward these objections, I have had to disregard them, in consideration of the position taken by the Supreme Army Command.*

NO. 46

TELEGRAM

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 12 1918.

I and General Ludendorff give our agreement to the wording of the reply to Wilson communicated to us over the telephone by Colonel von Haefen at 12.30 o'clock on October 12.

VON HINDENBURG.

NO. 47

GERMANY'S SECOND NOTE

BERLIN, *October 12, 1918.*

In reply to the question of the President of the United States of America the German Government hereby declares:

The German Government has accepted the principles laid down by President Wilson in his address of January the eighth and in his subsequent addresses as the foundations of a permanent peace of justice. Consequently its object in entering into discussions would be only to agree upon practical details of the application of these terms.

The German Government believes that the Governments of the Powers associated with the United States also accept the position taken by President Wilson in his addresses.

The German Government, in accordance with the Austro-Hungarian Government for the purpose of bringing about an armistice, declares itself ready to comply with the propositions of the President in regard to evacuation. The German Government leaves it to the President to bring about the meeting of a mixed commission whose duty it would be to make the necessary arrangements concerning the evacuation.

The present German Government which has undertaken the responsibility for this step towards peace has been formed by conferences and in agreement with the great majority of the Reichstag. The Chancellor, supported in all of his actions by the will of this majority, speaks in the name of the German Government and of the German people.

SOLF,

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

FROM WILSON'S SECOND NOTE TO THE ANSWER
THERE TO—NOS. 48 TO 66

NO. 48

WILSON'S SECOND NOTE

STATE DEPARTMENT, *October 14, 1918.*

Sir:

In reply to the communication of the German Government, dated the twelfth instant, which you handed me today, I have the honor to request you to transmit the following reply:¹

The unqualified acceptance by the present German Government and by a large majority of the German Reichstag of the terms laid down by the President of the United States of America in his address to the Congress of the United States on the eighth of January, 1918, and in his subsequent addresses justifies the President in making a frank and direct statement of his decision with regard to the communications of the German Government of the eighth [*third?*]² and twelfth of October, 1918.

It must be clearly understood that the process of evacuation and the conditions of an armistice are matters which must be left to the judgment and advice of the military advisers of the Government of the United States and the Allied Governments, and the President feels it his duty to say that no arrangement can be accepted by the Government of the United States which does not provide absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guaranties of the maintenance of the present military supremacy of the armies of the United States and of the Allies in the field. He feels confident that he can safely assume that this will also be the judgment and decision of the Allied Governments.

The President feels that it is also his duty to add that neither the Government of the United States nor, he is quite sure, the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, will consent to consider an armistice so long as the armed forces of Germany continue the illegal and inhumane practices which they still persist in. At the very time that the German Government approaches the Government of the United States with proposals of peace its submarines are engaged in sinking passenger ships at sea, and not the ships alone but the very boats in which their passengers and crews seek to make their way to safety; and in their present enforced withdrawal from Flanders and France the German Armies are pursuing a course of wanton destruction which has always been regarded as in direct violation of the rules and practices of civilized warfare. Cities and villages, if not destroyed, are being stripped of all they contain, not only, but often of their very inhabitants. The nations associated against Germany can not be expected to agree to a cessation of arms while acts

¹ Official English text, showing deviations in the retranslation from the German. *Official U. S. Bulletin*, October 15, 1918.

² Retranslation: "fifth." See, however, Document No. 34, post, p. 48, where the date is given as the "third."

of inhumanity, spoliation, and desolation are being continued which they justly look upon with horror and with burning hearts.

It is necessary, also, in order that there may be no possibility of misunderstanding, that the President should very solemnly call the attention of the Government of Germany to the language and plain intent of one of the terms of peace which the German Government has now accepted. It is contained in the address of the President delivered at Mount Vernon on the fourth of July last. It is as follows: "The destruction of every arbitrary¹ power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or, if it can not be presently destroyed, at least its reduction to virtual impotency." The power which has hitherto controlled² the German nation is of the sort here described. It is within the choice of the German nation to alter it. The President's words just quoted naturally constitute a condition precedent to peace, if peace is to come by the action of the German people themselves. The President feels bound to say that the whole process of peace will, in his judgment, depend upon the definiteness and the satisfactory character of the guaranties which can be given in this fundamental matter. It is indispensable that the Governments associated against Germany should know beyond peradventure with whom they are dealing.

The President will make a separate reply to the Royal and Imperial Government of Austria-Hungary.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

ROBERT LANSING.

NO. 49

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Ambassador to the Foreign Office

THE HAGUE, *October 15, 1918, 1.20 p.m.*

Sir Francis Oppenheimer, who for fear of being torpedoed is waiting at the Hook for an opportunity to proceed to England, made the following statement to a select circle:

Lloyd George wants two more months of war, as Germany would then be so completely conquered that she would simply have to accept any terms that were imposed. Therefore he wants to set conditions that Germany could not accept; they are those published in the Sunday morning papers: The occupation of Metz as well as of the bridge-heads of the Rhine; the dismantling of the Fleet; surrender of the U-Boats, etc. He expects a *levée en masse* in Germany, and war to the knife after they have been refused. This final battle, however, would last only fourteen days, and would be followed by collapse. England sees in the abolition of autocracy the abdication of the Emperor.

MALTZAN.

¹ Retranslation: "military."

² Retranslation: "determined the fate of."

NO. 50

TELEGRAM

Secretary of State, Retired, to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 16, 1918, 10.30 a.m.*

Field Marshal von Hindenburg has issued the following bulletin to the Army:

The political events of the last few days have made a deep impression on the Army, particularly on the officers' corps.

It is my duty to support the Government selected by His Imperial Majesty. I agree to the peace move.

The German Army is superior to all other armies in that it never plays politics. We will cling to that custom.

I expect that the confidence that was granted me in brighter times will be equally evinced at present.

HINTZE.

NO. 51

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

BERNE, LÖRRACH, *October 16, 1918, 11 p.m.*

French opposition directed against the armistice uses as its chief argument the allegation that the Supreme Army Command is in absolute agreement with the plan of evacuation and even wishes it, as by this means it can preserve Germany's Army and war material from entire destruction, and will maintain a favorable military situation, which might be dangerous and unacceptable to the Entente.

The enemy is making a good deal of capital in this way out of the insistent emphasis laid by the German press upon the fact that the military authorities (Ludendorff) are in agreement with the evacuation plan.

ROMBERG.

NO. 52

October 16, 1918.

Baron von Lersner telephones:

1. In his opinion the complete and immediate cessation of the U-Boat warfare is feasible, should we consider it necessary for political reasons.
2. He recommends that we take advantage of General Ludendorff's

presence tomorrow to prepare him for the possibility that the enemy might also require the evacuation of German territory (for example, Metz and Strassburg). *It would be advisable to discuss with the General, how far such a demand could eventually be complied with.*

3. At General Headquarters certain individuals are loudly announcing the opinion that now is the time for the German Commander in Chief to get into direct touch with the commanders in chief of the enemy. Baron von Lersner considers this idea questionable in the highest degree, as, with the army of the enemy in the mood it is in at the present moment, we would be assured of a direct refusal, and he urgently advocates our following the road opened by Wilson.

4. Baron Lersner suggests for consideration *the removal of General Headquarters to Berlin or some city in its vicinity (Potsdam or Brandenburg)* instead of to Homburg, in order to minimize the technical difficulties of the exchange of opinions between the political and the military authorities.

VON ROSENBERG.

NO. 53

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

STOCKHOLM, October 16, 1918.

I hear in Swedish circles, which are on good terms with the Entente, that the continued military retirement causes the demands of our enemies to increase more and more. The French and the Americans in particular want to carry the war into Germany. Any success, however small, would at the present time materially strengthen the influence of the more discreet elements in France and England.

LUCIUS.

NO. 54

CONFERENCE OF THE SECRETARIES OF STATE ON
OCTOBER 16*Extract*

Present:

The Imperial Chancellor,
The Vice Chancellor,
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
The Secretary of State of the Imperial Treasury Office,
Colonel von Haeften for the Supreme Army Command,
Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe,
Ministerial Director Deutelmoser,
Secretaries of State Groeber, Haussmann, Scheidemann.

VON PAYER refers to the fact that the Supreme Army Command is suggesting the creation of a propaganda for the final defense. The Cabinet is of the opinion that it is not yet the time for it. The Cabinet must first decide what shall be done about the Wilson note. In the meantime public meetings and discussions on the subject are undesirable. We must look fully into the question as to whether the troops can be withdrawn from the east.

Colonel VON HAEFTEN remarks that His Excellency Ludendorff will arrive in Berlin tomorrow. The questions that are to be put to him are being formulated at the Ministry of War. But the Supreme Army Command now desires to reply to the following counter-questions:

1. Does the internal situation permit the bringing of all of the troops out of the east into the west, or is there danger of Bolshevism penetrating into the country?

2. Will the German people, not only the educated circles, but the masses in general take up the fight to the bitter end, if they could be brought to recognize the fact that our military situation would be sufficiently strengthened to prevent the enemy forcing his way across the frontiers of the country, or is their moral power of resistance so exhausted that this question can not be answered with an unconditional affirmative? In this matter there should be no question of compulsion, but one of free will.

SOLF designates the telegram of the Supreme Army Command in which these questions are asked as an exceptionally dangerous document. There is, between the lines, more than an appeal to the German people to gather itself together—there is actually an attempt to shift the responsibility. Why is public feeling so depressed? Because the military power has collapsed. But now it should be said that the military power will collapse if

the popular spirit can not be upheld. This evasion of responsibility can not be permitted; it corresponds poorly with the words of General Ludendorff himself, who agreed with the Minister of War that a *levée en masse* was not possible. The second question, as to whether on account of the danger of Bolshevism, the troops could be withdrawn from the east, was equally critical. Should the answer be in the negative, then the Supreme Army Command would assert that with reinforcements it could have maintained the military situation. Did it actually believe that the few troops in the east could make a change in the relative strength of the Army? The General Field Marshal should be requested to send no more such telegrams here.

SCHEIDEMANN: The question must be most thoroughly discussed with General Ludendorff. I, too, consider that this is an attempt to shift the burden of responsibility for conditions. But in any case, the telegram of the Supreme Army Command was dispatched before the answer from Wilson had become known. Now, the public indignation apparently offers it some support. This is comprehensible, but we must not let it lead us astray; we must try to put ourselves in the enemy's place and view the state of affairs objectively.

The pillagings and devastations exercised an important influence on the tone of the reply.

And to these must be added the frightful disaster of the torpedoing of a passenger steamer, in which 600 people, among them many women and children, lost their lives. That sort of thing is terribly exasperating. The U-Boat war should come to an end at once; the few ships that might still be sunk are not worth considering.

We should also take a more decided stand on the amnesty question. Everyone was agreed that Liebknecht should benefit by it; only Under-Secretary of State "X" prevented the resolution from being adopted. This lack of far-sightedness has as a result that no concessions are made magnanimously, when the time is ripe for them, but too late and under pressure; and are thus without effect on the public mind.

Public opinion has furthermore been poisoned by a letter of the Emperor, which the *Isvestija* has published. It is true, the letter dates from the year 1895; nevertheless its attacks on the parties in the Reichstag have no less effect because of that fact. Does anybody really believe that the inclination among the people to retain the Emperor is strong enough today to make them lift a finger for him? The people now realize the situation. There will be a disaster if we are still going to show consideration; least of all should it be shown to Under-Secretaries of State who are unable to adapt themselves to the new situation. To have the Cabinet make decisions and the Privy Councilors do as they please is no longer possible.

Anyway, Wilson's note should not be answered until the matter has been discussed with General Ludendorff. He must tell us what the military

situation is, and we will describe the state of public spirit to him. It is frightful. It is not an outburst of wrath against the demands of our enemies, but of despair because we never do what is necessary, but feed out reforms drop by drop.

GROEBER shares Dr. Solf's views concerning the telegram of the Supreme Army Command. General Ludendorff said at the conference regarding the appeal for an armistice that he had a monthly deficit of 70,000 men, and knew of no way to make good this deficiency. It must be determined whether the military forces can yet be brought up to the total required, and exact figures must be gathered, too. In that way only could the questions of the Supreme Army Command be answered, questions of extraordinary importance for Germany and for the border nations. It would be impossible to deliver over to Bolshevism the border nations that we had created, and which were intended to constitute a military and economic wall against the east.

Perhaps the building of a military police force out of the population has been neglected in the meantime; now it is too late. Therefore he does not believe that many troops would be available from this source.

It would not suffice to question His Excellency Ludendorff alone; his judgment only is no longer safe to go by. It is necessary to take up the matter with other leaders of the western Armies. The Cabinet needed this support and protection, and in the form of documents.

The Secretary of State for the Naval Office should furthermore be heard on the question of whether such accidents as the sinking of the *Leinster* could not be avoided. So far as concerns sending forth a general summons to the final struggle, it is inconsistent to call on the whole nation, including the German Poles, to give the last drop of their blood, and at the same time not to revoke the exemption laws. That is an inadequate method of dealing with the great danger with which we were threatened.

To what purpose is the Cabinet striving to find means of improving the situation when the most important matters are not being attended to? As regards the Leibknecht affair, there is much to be said on both sides. But it has been decided to grant him an amnesty, and, therefore, it must not be said that this is impossible since that is derogatory of the Cabinet.

SCHEIDEMANN: And to the amnesty also.

GROEBER: These errors make an appeal at present of no effect. General Ludendorff must be asked, however, how he thinks it can be carried out and how long it will work. The longer we fight against superior numbers the heavier in the end must our reverses be. It was different at the beginning of the previous century, because the preliminary conditions necessary were there.

VON PAYER supports the proposition to hear other Army chiefs, and asks if General Ludendorff's earlier statements have been put on record.

VON HAEFTEN replies that the memoranda of them are partly at the Imperial Chancelry, partly at the Foreign Office.

Count ROEDERN doubts if the other Army leaders would be able to answer a summons.

VON HAEFTEN confirms the assumption by stating that during the present heavy battle, the Army leaders could not be called away, and defends the Supreme Army Command against the suspicion of having intended to shift any responsibility, by explaining the facts regarding the origin of the telegram. He supposes that His Excellency Ludendorff had no knowledge of the telegram at all.

VON PAYER thinks that written opinions from the other Army leaders would not be sufficient; they should, in case it were necessary, be represented before the Cabinet by their Chiefs of the General Staff. The Cabinet could not assume the responsibility before the country without having had a discussion with them.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR states that he has had an audience with His Majesty on the subject of hearing the other Army leaders, and expects to receive the Emperor's decision during the course of the day. On this decision will depend his course of action. We must be ready to count on the fact that Hindenburg and Ludendorff will take the consultation as a personal matter, but if the information is a necessity for the Cabinet, the appearance of both gentlemen must be insisted on.

NO. 55

MEETING OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL, OCTOBER 17, 1918

Present:

The Imperial Chancellor,

The Vice Chancellor,

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Secretary of State for the Imperial Treasury Office,

The Vice President of the Prussian State Ministry,

Secretaries of State Groeber, Haussmann, Scheidemann,

Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe,

Ministerial Director Deutelmöser.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR opens the session at 11.20 a.m. with the information that he has received a telegram from His Majesty according to which, in addition to the First Quartermaster General, other Army leaders are also to be heard. He has notified General Ludendorff of this. The General replied in great excitement *that in that case he would instantly resign*

from the service and General Hindenburg with him. It must now be considered what shall be done in view of this situation. In his opinion the first thing is to receive what information Ludendorff has to offer, and then decide on other matters.

SOLF reports that Delegate Riesser visited him at an unusually early hour this morning and told him that the confidence of the National Liberal party in General Ludendorff has been so shaken that it expects the Government not to come to its determination on the strength of what Hindenburg and Ludendorff alone have to say, but on the advice of other generals also.

VON PAYER thinks that this question ought not to be discussed in the presence of General Ludendorff, but the result of his statements should be awaited. Perhaps his opinion would be satisfactory, perhaps it would be necessary to hear still others.

COUNT ROEDERN asks if His Majesty intends to have the Army leaders come here.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR states that that would not be possible; that the military situation would be endangered thereby.

SCHEIDEMANN finds the wish to hear other Army leaders quite comprehensible; but this wish must be satisfied in such a manner as to give Hindenburg and Ludendorff no reason for carrying out their threat. The two leaders themselves could hardly take it amiss if by calling in other parties they should be partly relieved of the enormous responsibility.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR replies that he has explained all this to General Ludendorff, but that Ludendorff had answered that it would be a vote of lack of confidence. He (the Chancellor) had contested this view and insisted that it was not only the wish of His Majesty but the common wish of the whole people, and so perfectly natural that nobody would understand if the leaders resigned as a result.

FRIEDBERG corroborates the statement that the public would not understand it if the fate of Germany were left to the sole judgment of one man. On previous occasions, a war council had been called together at critical moments, and when it was recollected that a council of war had decided on the removal of Falkenhayn and the appointment of Hindenburg, the holding of a council of war at the present time could surely prove no cause for the resignation of the two leaders.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR repeats that he has already said all this to Ludendorff, but to no purpose. So the only question is whether the Government could assume the responsibility for their resignation.

HAUSSMANN is of the opinion that in the case of Hindenburg it would be nothing short of a catastrophe. The very same people who now appeared to have lost faith in the two generals would later reproach the Government because at so great a military crisis it had deprived Germany of its two recognized military chiefs.

GROEBER states that Delegate Stresemann had told him a short time ago that his whole faction was, he believed, unanimous in desiring that other Army chiefs should be heard.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR asks Secretary of State Scheidemann what he thinks would be the effect on the great mass of the people.

SCHEIDEMANN states that that is a hard matter to determine. Among labor circles confidence in Ludendorff had not just recently been shaken, but it had been lacking for a long time; in these circles his reputation was bad, not so much from the military as from the political point of view.

VON PAYER proposes to find a method of procedure that would not give offense; perhaps Hindenburg himself would convene a council of war, the conclusions of which might be imparted to the Government, so that the latter in turn might come to its decisions. But first it is necessary to enter upon the actual discussion of the situation. If Ludendorff should say that the case is desperate and that we can no longer hold the front, then other officers must be heard.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Ludendorff will not agree to that.

VON PAYER: If Ludendorff says that we can still hold our own and that it is not necessary for us to accept all the conditions laid down, he would attach no further value to the testimony of other Army leaders.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR agrees with this to the extent of admitting that the discussion of the situation should be the first thing.

Count ROEDERN raises the question whether it might not be possible for the Emperor to persuade the General Field Marshal to make the great sacrifice, and remain, even without Ludendorff.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR replies that even if this is not absolutely impossible, it is very improbable, as Hindenburg has been so closely identified with Ludendorff. It is Ludendorff who makes the decisions. That also could be discussed later, however.

NO. 56

QUESTIONNAIRE AS A BASIS FOR THE CONFERENCE WITH GENERAL LUDENDORFF ON OCTOBER 17, 1918¹

1. How long, if the war be continued by the utmost exertion of the national strength, can it be carried on so as to keep the enemy away from the frontiers of the German nation?
2. How strong is the western Army at the present time, including the garrison troops in Belgium and northern France?
3. How strong are the forces stationed in the east?

¹ No. 57.

4. How long a time would it take before the so-called *levée en masse* would be of any benefit to our position on the western front?

5. How long a time would it take to transfer to the west such troops as can be spared from the east?

6. Can any guaranty be given that the western front at its present strength will suffer no catastrophe before it receives reinforcement from home and from the east?

7. How many troops can be supplied to the western armies:

(a) From home?

(b) From the east?

8. What is the fighting value of the reinforcements?

(a) From home?

(b) From the east?

9. Would the oil provision for the Army and the country in general be so imperiled by stripping the eastern districts of German troops that we might, in consequence, be forced to conclude a premature peace, or to suspend submarine warfare?

10. What is the strength of the reserve forces now at the command of our enemies:

(a) Americans?

(b) English?

(c) French?

(d) Italians?

11. For how long a time must we reckon with big attacks on the west front?

12. If Austria should drop out as an ally, would the transfer of the Italian army to the western front be likely?

13. How strong is the Italian army?

14. Is the formation of a new southeastern front likely?

15. What value can be placed on the fighting ability of the Russian Red armies?

16. Is the formation of a new eastern front likely?

17. Is it likely that during the course of the coming year the nations of Europe which have remained neutral will be forced by our enemies to enter the war against us?

18. What is the average of Americans being brought to France monthly?

19. What will be the probable strength of the American army on the western front in the spring?

20. What will be the probable strength next spring of the Allied enemy armies on the western front (American, English, French, Italian)?

21. Will our military situation be better or worse by next spring?

NO. 57

FULL SESSION OF OCTOBER 17, 1918

Present:

The Imperial Chancellor,
The Vice Chancellor,
The Minister of War,
The Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, the Imperial Treasury Office,
the War Food Administration, the Imperial Naval Office,
The Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the Navy,
The Vice President of the Prussian Ministry of State,
Secretaries of State Groeber, Haussmann, Scheidemann,
Under-Secretary of State Göppert,
Under-Secretary of State von Stumm,
Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe,
Ministerial Director Deutmoser,
General Ludendorff,
General Hoffmann,
Colonel Heye.

THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: The situation in which we find ourselves is the result of the move we made on October 5. At that time the Supreme Army Command urgently requested that we send the peace note and the appeal for an armistice to President Wilson. We received a question in answer, to which we made reply. Now we have before us a new note, containing increased demands on the part of Wilson, and concerning which we must now come to some conclusion. Wilson has evidently been placed in a difficult position by the American chauvinists and by the pressure of France and England, but, as I hope, he himself is desirous that we should make it possible for him to continue to deal with us and to overcome the opposition of the war party.

It is thus that I view the situation. Before we dispatch the note to Wilson we must determine definitely the requirements of the military situation of Germany. For this purpose we have requested Your Excellency to appear and give us information on the subject. We have laid before Your Excellency a number of formal questions in reply to which we hope to receive information. Your Excellency has put other questions to us, to which we shall make answer in the course of the discussion.

The first question is, whether, by bringing over the divisions from the east, the western front can be so strengthened that we may count on holding out for some time?

The second question is directed to finding out if the Army can be sufficiently strengthened to continue holding out by increased reinforcements from Germany itself.

General LUDENDORFF: Some time ago a number of questions were put to me, to which it was absolutely impossible to give exact answers. War is no example in arithmetic. War is full of probabilities and improbabilities. No one knows what will eventually happen. When we reached East Prussia in August, 1914, and, with the help of my loyal colleague Hoffmann, the orders for the battle of Tannenberg were issued, nobody knew what would happen, whether Rennenkampf would march or not. He did not march and the battle was won. Soldiers' luck is a part of war; perhaps Germany will have some soldiers' luck again.

I can only state to you my convictions. The responsibility for what I say rests on myself, where it has rested for four long and difficult years.

If I should be asked whether the eastern divisions will bring about a change in the situation, I should have to ask in return, what can we take away from the east? I have talked the matter over with Hoffmann. We have just set three divisions free by the evacuation of White Russia; but that sort of thing moves slowly. We still have in that district great stores of oats, and we shall be particularly in need of oats during the coming year; that is to be considered.

So we get three divisions. A change in the situation can hardly be accomplished by three divisions; but a soldier must make use of everything of which he can get hold. We could not do this before because we had to protect the distant frontier against the Bolsheviks, until we received our money. How many men have we now in the east?

Colonel HEYE: Still twenty-four divisions. Seven of these are still in the upper east.

General HOFFMANN: Seven in the upper east, five are stationed in the Ukraine, twelve in Roumania.

General LUDENDORFF: And now comes the question, can we give up the Ukraine or not? The Supreme Army Command entered the Ukraine by agreement with the heads of the Government because we needed the country to strengthen our economic situation, and because we had to break through the eastern front of our enemies. If we can dispense with the supplies from the Ukraine, and if we can risk the danger of the Ukraine's becoming Bolshevikistic, then we can remove our divisions from there.

I believe that we are absolutely in need of the Ukraine from the economic and also from a military point of view. We cannot carry on the war in the west without the horses of the Ukraine; whether we can get enough of them from our own agricultural districts, I do not know. I should then have to ask for different instructions concerning the general conduct of affairs in the east than those which were given to me in March.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Would the withdrawal of the troops from the east so strengthen the western front that it could hold out?

General LUDENDORFF: That would certainly be true to some extent. The

only question would be, whether the economic and political disadvantages and the danger to the interior might not outweigh that advantage.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Would the new troops lend our western Army such attacking powers that the enemy might be brought to ask a place at the conference table?

General LUDENDORFF: No, those troops no longer have any attacking power; we have drawn all the good out of them. They still possess a certain power of resistance, but it must not be forgotten that the troops in the east no longer have the spirit of those in the west; General Hoffmann will perhaps talk on that subject.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: One question more. By bringing over the troops from the east we should only postpone the moment which we thought we had reached at the beginning of October, and we should once more find ourselves in the position that has forced us to make the move for peace?

General LUDENDORFF: That would depend on what the country can give us. It is a question of men.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I beg General Hoffmann to offer his views.

General HOFFMAN: The divisions in the east consist of men of between thirty-five and forty-five years of age. The broad districts that they occupy, the temptations to which they are subjected and to which they often succumb—either bribery by the eastern Jewish tradesmen or the Bolshevik propaganda—have injured severely the morale of the troops. Before the transfer of the last troops, we had in Lithuania approximately one soldier to every eighteen square kilometers. For months the Army has been scattered in solitary posts, under but slight supervision, and Bolshevistic ideas combined with bribery have gained much ground.

We could only turn over ten divisions, as we need two divisions and the cavalry to guard the border toward the Ukraine.

I would repeat that the divisions are no longer of any use for purposes of attack. They still have defensive strength. They carry out their eastern task brilliantly. I would even undertake to make one more attack with them in the east. But they are no longer capable of being made use of against the power of the enemy in the west.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: So you would consider their removal in itself to be possible?

General HOFFMAN: If we are to be withdrawn it is high time to do so. I need three months to get the troops out of the Ukraine. We can only run two or three trains a day there, and even of these a number are omitted for lack of machine oil. And sabotage, yes, even the outbreak of a revolution would have to be reckoned with, if the railroads were to be manned with Ukrainians. Even today the preparation of the troops for entrainment, though I should leave all the material behind, particularly the harvest already gathered, would take three days for the narrow gauge railroad, six

days for the normal gauge line. But these estimates of time are figured on the assumption that we take along no provisions; these would then be lost to us. The commander at Minsk told me that it would require 500 trains to bring away the harvest; of course we have not got them. We must then let the troops march.

General LUDENDORFF: Up to the present time about one million people have been fed by the eastern district. These would now become a burden to the country. The cattle brought from the Ukraine enabled the stocks of cattle at home to be spared. Everyone knows the difficulties of feeding stock in Germany. If we have to give up the cattle from the eastern districts, the Quartermaster General is of opinion that the greatest difficulties would be created throughout the country. I have asked that this may be confirmed by the Government. The Supreme Army Command regards the question of live stock as a decisive one; we have brought 140,000 horses from the Ukraine alone.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: What is the status of the Bolshevik army; is it becoming stronger? Can it threaten us?

General HOFFMANN: No, purely from a military point of view, it could do us no harm for an appreciable period of time; from the army we have nothing to fear. It is the danger to morale.

General LUDENDORFF: And that danger is a great one. Our cordon is so weak that we are not in a position to keep it out of the country.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: The west would therefore acquire no offensive strength from the eastern troops; but the twelve divisions available would be of value for defense. To get them here would take three months. By bringing them we lose our supplies of oats, and, furthermore, a great number of people hitherto supported from that territory would have to be supported by local products. Your Excellency now puts the counter-question, of what value is the Ukraine in the eyes of the Government, so far as the feeding of Germany is concerned.

General LUDENDORFF: Yes. We have purchased a million and a half tons of grain that is already beginning to . . .

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I declare the debate on this question open.

Count ROEDERN: The Secretaries of State for the Imperial Agricultural Department and the War Food Administration are not present. There exists a difference of opinion between them. The War Food Administration wants to continue to make use of the Ukraine; the Imperial Agricultural Department is very skeptical. So far as I can judge the situation from the letters which have been exchanged and which have been submitted to me, the view of the Secretary of State for the Imperial Agricultural Department seems to me the better grounded. In any case, what we have received from the Ukraine for the supply of the civil population has been very trifling. The supplies for the Army were of much greater value and these must now

be procured at home. Has the Army received stocks of cattle from the Ukraine?

General LUDENDORFF: We cannot make any distinction between the Army and the civil population. We are all in the same big economic boat, and whether cattle from the Ukraine are used for the Army or the civil population is all the same. We must have the cattle; whence we get them is not for me to worry my head over. Then again, the matter of raw materials for war puposes comes into the question. We are now losing the Bor copper mine, because the Serbs are retaking it; if we evacuate Belgium, too, the economic situation will become so strained that we shall not know at all how we are going to carry on the war. If we retire in the east and in the west at the same time, we shall collapse.

Secretary of State SOLF: The representative of the Foreign Office in the Ukraine had an interview with me yesterday concerning conditions there. From the economic portion of his report I should like to quote that the value of the Ukraine for the support of the Army is immense, and we can make no distinction as to who first gets the advantage of these supplies. In any case the economic value of the country is very considerable.

I asked Mr. von Mumm what would happen in the Ukraine if we withdrew the German troops. He was perfectly sure that the Bolsheviki would then ravage it in the wildest and most frightful manner. Every wealthy man would be decapitated.

General LUDENDORFF: That, too, we must consider into the bargain. Is the evacuation necessary or not necessary for Germany? If it is, it must be carried out, despite all the horrible consequences.

Count ROEDERN: The question can only be answered by reference to the crop estimates now available; for that we need the Secretary of State for the War Food Administration.

SCHEIDEMANN: If we put aside all these questions of food and Bolshevism, the question still remains, can the western front hold out for another three months, or will a break through have occurred before then?

General LUDENDORFF: I have already told the Imperial Chancellor that I considered a break through the line possible, but not probable. I really do not consider a break probable. If you ask me my conscientious opinion, I can only answer, "I do not fear it."

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I now take up the second question: Is the country prepared to place the necessary supply of men at the disposal of the Supreme Army Command?

We must, however, also know beforehand whether it is industrially possible to draft the necessary supply.

General LUDENDORFF: I do not overlook that. I have taken a great deal of trouble over the matter since 1916; hardly a month has gone by in which I have not urged it. Will the reinforcements come at the right time?

Reinforcements always come at the right time. In war you never know how long an action will last. How often have I sent in reserves when every one thought they would get there too late, and yet they arrived in time. You have to send them in and leave the rest to fate.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I beg the Minister of War to express his opinion on the subject.

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: Two measures come under consideration. The normal method of general reinforcement, or one great reinforcement, which is prejudicial to the normal method. In favor of the first measure is the following fact: the normal reinforcement of reserves for the Field Army figures, according to the latest estimates for Prussia and the other states together, 190,000 men monthly. They can be enlisted without very manifest inroads on the economic status of the country. The individual figures I probably do not need to give here.

If the Army is to receive a heavy reinforcement at one time, I figure it roughly at about 600,000 men. At that, I am not reckoning it very high. The individual estimates, in fact, yield a total of 637,000. In such a case the effect would be very much felt. I do not believe that a material diminution of the production of war materials would result, but the nation's agriculture would suffer. The individual reports can be gone over separately, and the proportion of untrained men obtainable can then be taken into consideration, for instance, the balance of the draft of 1900, of whom some 50,000 are engaged in the trades. The rest of the draft is already trained and in great part at the depots; one third of them at home. That would, of course, be the last. Training is naturally necessary for the others.

But we must then consider that if 600,000 men are sent to the front, further reserves will be necessary. After that we could no longer supply around 190,000 men a month, but only 100,000 monthly for the next half year. Further reserves up to the autumn of 1919 could then be supplied at the rate of 150,000 men a month, if the class of 1901 were enlisted earlier. The source of supply for the next year would thus be exhausted toward the end of September.

General LUDENDORFF: I am absolutely in favor of the second plan. If we had had this favorable number of men, we would not have suffered the crisis on the western front. And if I can get the men, I can look forward into the future with confidence. But I must get the men, and get them soon at that; then we can dare to be confident once more.

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: I am willing to promise that I will bend every effort toward enlisting the number stated; so now we will not waste a day in getting to work.

General LUDENDORFF: I should like to paint for you gentlemen a picture of the situation. Yesterday we had a battle at Ypres. The English and the French attacked us with very strong forces. We knew that, and we

wanted to hold our own; we saw the danger approaching. It was a difficult situation to be in, to have to say that we are going to be driven back, and yet to have to hold our own. We were driven back, but it came out well. It is true that gaps four kilometers wide were broken in our front, but the enemy did not push through, and we held the front. How much reinforcements from home would have meant to us then!

The strain on every individual man has reached a stage that cannot any longer be overestimated. Soldier and officer have a feeling of isolation. If an officer leaves them, the men say: "Where are you going, sir?" and then they run away. If we can fill up the gaps, we can hold our own against all inroads. If we can say to the men at the front, "you will get reinforcements," they will gain confidence and we, too, can feel confidence.

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: If I understand His Excellency Ludendorff correctly, he says that if he gets the reinforcement all at once, the situation will be materially altered.

General LUDENDORFF: Yes.

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: Are you still considering the fact that the Americans will right along get greater reinforcements than we?

General LUDENDORFF: The Americans must not be rated too highly. They are pretty dangerous, but up to the present we have beaten them back. They make a difference to the relative number, it is true, but our men do not worry about the Americans; it is about the English. Our Army must be relieved of the feeling of isolation.

Colonel HEYE: How long will it take to carry out the second plan of providing 600,000 men?

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: I should not like to suggest too short a time. We will have to take men out of the industries and out of agriculture more quickly than we thought at first. The Home Defense Army can be turned to account more quickly. From the Prussian home defense, for example, we will obtain 75,000 men. I have exercised pressure there; we must not be anxious about that. In addition we shall get 25,000 more from the other states. Next, we have about 50,000 untrained men and 250,000 trained; but the utilization of these will be a matter of weeks. That will be satisfactory to the Supreme Army Command?

General LUDENDORFF: We should like it better if they all came at once, for what is so depressing the Army is that its strength is gradually getting less and less.

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: The transport conditions of the country also add difficulties. Recently at one of the general depots there were 6,000 men waiting to be transported to the western front. They could not be sent, however, as there was a lack of rolling stock; this might happen again.

General LUDENDORFF: With us, too, at the time of the evacuation, a great transport crisis occurred, which was communicated to the nation;

but that has been relieved. I shall be only too thankful if everything humanly possible is being done at home.

Now I come to another point, which does not figure on the *questionnaire*: the morale of the army. It is very important. His Excellency Scheüch referred the other day to the 41st Division, and issued an order in regard to it. I regret to have to concede that the order was justified. The Division absolutely refused to fight on the 8th of August; that was a black day in the history of Germany. At present that same division is battling gloriously on the eastern bank of the Meuse. That is all a matter of morale. The morale was bad at that time. The division had gripe; it had no potatoes. The spirit introduced by the men from home was also bad. The drafts arrived in a state that in no wise corresponded to order or discipline. There were gross cases of insubordination. I make a custom of talking with the officers and troops who arrive. One officer told me at that time that he had never in his life seen such a draft as he had brought on from the Seventh Army Corps district of the 13th Division. He thought he had Russian Bolsheviki under him, not German soldiers.

This spirit spread from home into the Army, and I am well aware that now, on the other hand, the tone introduced into the country by men on leave is very bad. I have done my best to improve it, and I must urgently request that not only should men be sent, but also that some care should be taken as to their morale.

There are many shirkers in Maubeuge, for instance. In our great Army we have to deal with heroes and with weak, very weak men too, but they must be enlisted as well. Freshen up the country. I address an urgent request to all the staff officers to endeavor to improve morale at home and to impress upon the soldier in Belgium that he is defending German soil. From various directions—for instance, from the Gallwitz Army—it is reported that the armistice negotiations are having a very bad effect. In Belgium the men say “Why should we go on fighting here if we are to evacuate”; and at Verdun they say “Of what use are our sacrifices if France is to get Alsace-Lorraine after all.” We cannot use men whose morale is not good. A divisional staff told me the other day that they had got rid of their men who came from the east, as they were no longer fit to be used in the west. The temper of the country must be influenced.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: As His Excellency General Ludendorff has touched on the question of morale, I consider it necessary to address a request to the three parliamentary Secretaries of State to inform us of their opinion on the spirit in the country, and to give their views concerning the proposals that have been made.

Secretary of State GROEBER: The spirit of the nation during the summer of this year was a very bad one. I was personally convinced of this on a journey to southern Germany. It was plainly caused by men home on

leave, who told all sorts of horrible stories—many false stories, but many true ones. Such things have a worse and worse effect the longer the war lasts. Naturally in a big army a certain amount of violence occurs in the treatment of the men, but a great improvement can be made in this respect.

Above all else, something should be done with regard to the difference in food of men and officers, particularly as regards officers' canteens. There the officer can provide himself with food and luxuries; when a soldier comes up, the word is, "That is not for you!" In ordinary times such things are tolerable, but in such times as these, they give rise to the thought: what do we not have to bear, and how well the officers live! Cannot this contrast be done away with?

General LUDENDORFF: I take the absolute stand that the officer should live in exactly the same manner as the men. I have looked into this complaint, and through the general commissariat officer announced the rule that there is only one canteen, and that it is open to officers and men alike; no difference should be made in price. There arose one difference: the large canteens increased their profits by means of the little canteens. The large ones deliver to the small ones at reduced prices, so that the little ones can earn something. Now some of the highest staffs had no regimental canteen, but drew their necessities from the large canteens direct, and, as it happened, at the lower prices. As soon as I found that out I forbade it, and caused the staffs to buy from the large canteens at the same price as from the small ones.

In the trenches, officers and men eat from the same field-kitchen. That the staff should have things prepared a little better for it, can be understood; we would not be expected to eat from the field-kitchen. But what is right and proper, we insist on.

The worst of it is that reports get about which may rob us of honor and reputation, and we can do nothing about it. Give me specific facts and I will take action, but you can rest assured that conditions are not as black as they are painted. In general, everything is well ordered.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOT: I would ask you not to go into details. We have no time for that. What do the Secretaries of State think of the feeling in Germany in connection with the regulations proposed by the Minister of War?

Secretary of State SCHEIDEMANN: I am willing to believe that hundreds of thousands of men can be mobilized for the Army, but any man deceives himself who believes that these hundreds of thousands would raise the spirit of the Army. It is my firm conviction that the contrary would be the case. The very length of the war has broken the spirit of the people no less than the disappointments they have suffered. The U-Boat war has disappointed us, the technical superiority of the enemy, the defection of our allies, or, at least, their complete bankruptcy, as well as the ever-growing misery at home. Now we have the effects of reaction. Men on leave come

from the Army with ugly stories; returning from home they carry bad news back to the Army. This exchange of ideas depresses public spirit. We should be deceiving ourselves, if we tried to gloss it over. The workman is coming nearer and nearer to the point of saying: "Better a dreadful end than a horror without end."

General LUDENDORFF: Could Your Excellency not succeed in elevating the morale of the masses?

Secretary of State SCHEIDEMANN: It is a question of potatoes. We have no longer any meat. We cannot deliver potatoes because we are short 4,000 cars every day. We have absolutely no fats left. The misery is so great that it is like asking a complete riddle when one asks one's self: What does North Berlin live on and how does East Berlin exist? As long as this riddle cannot be solved, it is impossible to elevate the popular morale. It would be the height of dishonesty if we left anyone in doubt on the question.

Secretary of State HAUSSMANN: When we consider the temper of the people we are dealing with a very unstable factor. There is no doubt that Parliament will issue the appeal to the people couched in the strongest terms, and also may attain a powerful effect, but it depends upon the result of the coming events as to how long, how many weeks or days, it may last. The public has only been made alive to the real gravity of the situation by the sharp tone of Wilson's note. As a result there exist very conflicting shades of feeling. They would come forward if the shameless demands, which can be read between the lines of the note, were to be clearly stated. The tone of the negotiations depends on how many days, allowing for the needs of the Army, we have free for that purpose.

General LUDENDORFF: If the Army can get over the next four weeks, and winter begins to come on, we shall be on "safe ground." If it would prove possible to raise the public morale during these four weeks, it would be worth a very great deal to us in a military way. I will do everything that I can to improve the provisioning of the country. I will discuss the matter with the Director of Railroads at once. How far it may be possible, I can not foretell.

Secretary of State SCHEIDEMANN: The lack of cars was very forcibly impressed upon us the other day by Mr. von Waldow. He said in speaking of it that soon we would not even get the small quantity of potatoes that is being distributed now.

General LUDENDORFF: I will do what is necessary.

Vice Chancellor VON PAYER: I do not take so dark a view of the situation as His Excellency Scheidemann. One must make distinctions. I remember the feeling during the summer. No one doubted then that we would finally emerge from the war as victors, but the people were very tired of the war, and as a result, the popular morale was not good. Nevertheless, nobody dreamed that we could be ruined.

When we forwarded the first note, the people asked: "What is the matter? Things do not seem to be going so well." Soon their feeling became uncertain. Then when the second Wilson note arrived, their spirit broke down and they saw that it was a matter of life and death; yet this feeling, also, underwent a change. With the realization that we were to be destroyed as a nation, above all from the industrial point of view, the thought came to every mind, "Do we have to endure that, or might it not still be possible to avoid it?" If we tell the people that there is still a possibility of avoiding it, if you will only hold out; but if you can not hold out a couple of weeks more, then you can count on the fact that Germany will be practically wiped out of the society of nations and you will have to reckon on a burden of reparations that will crush us, then we might put some spirit into them.

If we can succeed in so wording the note that the people will gain the assurance from it that we are in a very difficult position, but that we shall not throw up the game, then we shall not have lost everything even now.

General LUDENDORFF: The Vice Chancellor has guessed my very thoughts. The only question is: How shall we do it? To that I can only repeat my plea: Get hold of the people, raise them to the heights! Can't Mr. Ebert do this? It must be done.

Vice President FRIEDBERG: In any case, action must be taken very quickly. Of late the situation has been very serious. We have seen the highest provincial officers gathered here. The clergymen of Berlin met together. The different parties have held factional sessions; not one single person knew where he was at, and all of them tore their hair in despair at finding themselves suddenly on the brink of such a catastrophe. It is our duty to say: Consider the situation as serious, but not as desperate. The latter is not the way to raise the public morale.

General LUDENDORFF: Certainly not.

Vice President FRIEDBERG: Now we hear that the state of affairs is really quite different. Therefore I agree with His Excellency von Payer that we must reap all the advantage we can from Wilson's note as quickly as possible.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Your Excellency is of opinion that it is necessary to maintain the public morale at a high level for four weeks?

General LUDENDORFF: I should like it better if it were to be for a longer period. In any case, after that period the crisis at the western front will be at an end, even if we have to retire further. I can feel that. The force of the attacks during the last few days has been but slight.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: But within a period of eight or ten days there will come a new wave, as Your Excellency told me yourself during our conversation.

General LUDENDORFF: It is coming. A new attack is now in progress on

the 10th Army front; how matters stand there, I do not know. Tomorrow there will be one against the 5th Army; they do not cease.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: It is a question, then, of whether the measures that you recommend will be sufficient to put such obstacles in the way of these attacks that we can be free to work politically. Your Excellency knows that I was not at the time in favor of the peace note, but I was told that every hour was costing us so or so many hundred thousand men, and that every moment might bring on a catastrophe. His Excellency von Hintze is my witness.

His Excellency VON HINTZE: That is so, Your Highness.

General LUDENDORFF: The position is the same today; the line may be broken and we may be defeated any day. The day before yesterday things went well; they may equally well go badly for us.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: While you may say that after four weeks we shall be in better shape, then the English may say that if it lasts for six weeks to come, they will not find it necessary to negotiate with the Germans. In any case, the Entente is doing all that it can to protract our transactions with Wilson.

General LUDENDORFF: The conferences in Berlin have come to the ears of the Entente, and have mightily increased their eagerness to attack. But I do believe that every military reinforcement of the front also strengthens the position of Your Highness in the matter of concluding a peace.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: That is correct.

General LUDENDORFF: Whether the reinforcement will come at the right time or not, I can not say. I repeat that whatever comes is always opportune.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: How strong is the Army in the west?

Colonel HEYE: The western front now consists of 91 divisions, of which 4 are Austrian and 7 are from the east. They vary in strength. Twenty-eight divisions have battalion strength of somewhere from 200 to 300 men. The others run approximately from 400 to 500.

General LUDENDORFF: If we had battalions of full strength, the situation would be saved.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Questions 1 to 8 have been disposed of by the preceding discussion. I now come to question 9:

Would the oil provision for the Army and the country in general be so imperilled by stripping the eastern districts of German troops that we might, in consequence, be forced to conclude a premature peace, or to suspend submarine warfare?

General LUDENDORFF: That is a question to be answered by the Minister of War.

SCHEÜCH: This point is certainly of the utmost importance. If Roumania is no longer at our disposal, we can carry on the war for a month and

a half longer. We had previously counted on two months; but that calculation has not proved correct, as our transport equipment has decreased and the consumption has grown larger.

How long the U-Boat war can be continued after the Roumanian oil supply ceases, the military administration of Roumania does not know, as we do not know the amount consumed by the Navy. The figures of the naval authorities dealing with the amount used by motors reached us yesterday and have not yet been checked up.

It is absolutely necessary that the management of the oil supplies for the Army and Navy should be carried out conjointly. We must consider in common not only how we shall share the supply, but also how far we can make it go. That is not clear at present. I beg that the matter may be discussed as early as possible, this afternoon, if it is practicable. Perhaps the Supreme Army Command and the Admiralty Staff will participate in the discussion.

We are also facing serious conditions in regard to the matter of supplying the country; our needs are only covered for the next few months. Yesterday the Imperial Ministry for Economic Affairs discussed the question: "How can we cut down the provision of oil for lighting purposes throughout the country?" Any retrenchment will naturally be a serious matter, for there is scarcely any substitute left. For many industries lighting will simply cease.

But in this matter, too, I can only describe the situation definitely after seeing the figures relating to the amount used, stocks on hand, and to the possibilities of meeting requirements and making supplies last.

Admiral SCHEER: Up to the present, the Navy has administered its own supplies. The result: We can carry on the U-Boat war for eight months to come, even without recourse to Roumania.

But I do not take the stand that the supplies should be so administered that the Army should not come to an end any sooner than the Navy. We must both work together to bring the war to a successful conclusion. I am quite ready to cooperate toward the end that neither party shall be the *beatus possidens* while the other has come to the end of its resources.

Secretary of State VON MANN: I am quite of the same opinion. Whether or in what way it would be of advantage to procure special provisions of petroleum for the civil population, I do not know. Perhaps something like ten per cent of the supply might be given over for this purpose; but I am not in a position to judge.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Nor do I know myself how great is the proportionate quantity used by the Army, the Navy and the national industries respectively.

Under-Secretary of State GÖPPERT: I beg that the civil population be also considered in administering the supply. The people have been prom-

ised 10,000 tons a month; that is the minimum. If we want to keep the people reasonably quiet during the winter, it must stay at that figure. When last winter 12,000 tons a month were being distributed, the question of lighting facilities was already most critical.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Then how long can the Army, the Navy and the country hold out from the moment when the supply of oil from Roumania ceases? I should like to have an answer to this question within the shortest possible time. When can I have it?

Minister of War SCHEÜCH: The calculations will be made this afternoon.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: When I am told that the country can get along for a couple of months, the Army for a month and a half, and the Navy for eight months to come, it means nothing. The figures must be reduced to a common denominator.

I should like to take advantage of the opportunity to ask His Excellency Göppert still another question concerning the importance of the Ukraine as a source of supplies. In view of the situation on the western front, is the continued occupation of the Ukraine by twelve German divisions justified by the necessities of supplies for Germany?

Vice Chancellor VON PAYER: The Secretary of State for the War Food Administration has just arrived.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I beg the Secretary of State to answer the question.

Secretary of State VON WALDOW: If the question is put in that way, I can answer it flatly in the negative. We have included the food and fodder resources of the Ukraine in our scheme of economic supplies only as an expedient for emergency and to improve the situation. But if it comes to the point where it is necessary to enter upon a last desperate struggle, we could also do without the Ukraine and would then attempt to increase our supplies by smuggling.

General LUDENDORFF: I again call attention to the fact that at present the supplies from the Ukraine are supporting about one million people, whom we would under those circumstances have to provide for ourselves.

Secretary of State VON WALDOW: In that case, I must first receive information as to the rations and quantities concerned.

General LUDENDORFF: I will have the Quartermaster General go over the question with you fully and frankly. We have been told time and time again by the War Food Administration that we had to hold the Ukraine. We must have a plain and unbiased understanding about it. If we do not need the Ukraine in order to exist, it is simply a matter of how many troops are needed to keep the danger of Bolshevism away from the frontier.

Secretary of State VON WALDOW: When I affirmed the necessity of the Ukraine, the situation was quite different.

General LUDENDORFF: If we give up the Ukraine, our live-stock resources will be crippled. But the question does not demand immediate solution. Austrian troops are also in process of transportation to Roumania from the Ukraine. Only we must arrive at a thoroughly definite decision.

Under-Secretary of State GÖPPERT: A Commissary from Kiev, with whom I had a talk an hour ago, told me that there existed no hope of getting any large amount of grain from the Ukraine this winter. Even the prices would prevent that. They are already paying 3000 rubles for . . . Nor is the amount of other forms of provisions so great that it would have to be taken into serious consideration for the sustenance of the German people. On the other hand, the conviction exists that the withdrawal of the German troops would be followed by the outbreak of Bolshevism with all its consequences. The one center which might exercise a tranquilizing effect on the Russian ferment would disappear, all Russia would be delivered over to Bolshevism and our connections in southern Russia would be destroyed. That must also be taken into consideration.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: The Foreign Office has taken steps to insure the holding of Roumania, but it is possible that Roumania prefers to await our destruction. Are we to use force against Roumania?

General LUDENDORFF: Together with the Foreign Office, we recognized the danger and discussed her attitude. On October 10, we proposed, in common with Austria, to use force with Roumania. Austria did not wish to do so. So far as troops were concerned, we had enough. Some are moving slowly forward through Hungary, and in addition there are two divisions of Austrians and a cavalry division from the Ukraine, which General von Arz has brought up. The Roumanian army would not open an attack alone, but only if it were joined by a more or less large number of Entente troops. Such troop movements are now in progress. At present one is being started in the direction of Belgrade by way of Nish, and another, it seems, across the estuary of the Maritza near Constantinople. So far as I can estimate the situation at all in the light of the reports that have been received, there is nothing to worry about for the next week.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I beg the Foreign Office to express its opinion on the subject.

Secretary of State SOLF: I am not sufficiently informed.

Count ROEDERN: Can the Danube front be forced?

General LUDENDORFF: If Constantinople should fall, the English fleet would then enter the Black Sea, and then Roumania could not be held. But has everything possible been done by the Foreign Office to make Roumania keep up to the mark?

Under-Secretary of State VON STUMM: As soon as the Entente approaches Roumania with an army, we can keep her no longer.

General LUDENDORFF: That is my opinion also.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Now I come to a broader question: What reserves have the Entente?

Colonel HEYE: Last week the French had forty divisions of reserves, the English 25, the Americans 18, the Italians 1; and there should be added to that the Portuguese, the Poles and other auxiliary troops, a total of 87 divisions of reserves and a full strength of 220 divisions.

General LUDENDORFF: We have 191 divisions on the western front. So the numbers of the divisions are not themselves so very unequal; it is their strength that differs. A French division is weak, too, not materially stronger than one of ours; an English division is stronger, and the 40 American divisions are very strong. The numerical superiority of the Entente is not sufficiently expressed by figuring up the numbers of the divisions.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: The eleventh question reads: For how long a time must we reckon with big attacks on the west front?

General LUDENDORFF: They may continue, they may come to an end; I do not know.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Is it likely that more Italian troops will be brought up to the west front?

General LUDENDORFF: It is possible, but not probable. The war-weariness in Italy is very great.

Count ROEDERN: Is the possibility of an attack by the Italians on Germany through Austria excluded?

General LUDENDORFF: It is not a physical impossibility. They could come through the Tyrol, but we do not have to calculate on that for the present; otherwise we will cause ourselves further anxiety. If the Italians fight the Germans, it will probably occur only on the west front.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Shall we have to form a new eastern front?

General LUDENDORFF: There are three divisions stationed in Serbia and two Austrian divisions; in addition the (?) troops have reached the Danube. At the present moment there is no danger. In a week it may be different.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: I am thinking of the eastern front toward Russia.

General LUDENDORFF: General Hoffmann believes that an army capable of fighting will not face us again in that locality; but we have to bar the frontier and guard against roving bands. Perhaps now, if we evacuate the Ukraine, the Bolsheviki will grow arrogant and declare war on us. But I do not believe that there is a Red army capable of fighting.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: The barrier is not very effective, hundreds are getting through it.

General HOFFMANN: Yes, with and without passes; with genuine ones and with forged ones.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: But a military break through need not be feared?

General LUDENDORFF: No, I do not consider it likely.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: A further question: How many Americans are arriving in France every month?

Colonel HEYE: According to the average of the last few months, 250,000.

General LUDENDORFF: For April, May and June it was 350,000.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Has their number not increased since then?

Colonel HEYE: At the beginning of the year the number was much less, approximately 85,000 a month, then it increased greatly up to midsummer; since then it has grown no larger.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: What will be the strength of the American army by next spring?

Colonel HEYE: The American Army Command reckons the number of troops to be at present 1,200,000; for next spring it figures on 2,300,000 fighting men.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: And have they the corresponding equipment?

Colonel HEYE: Yes, if things go on as they have been going, it can be counted on. The American statements have always been correct.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: How high must we estimate the present strength of enemy troops on the west front?

Colonel HEYE: That of the French is much diminished; that of the English will be maintained at about the same level, as they can still bring up reserve troops for the present; that of the Americans will increase.

General LUDENDORFF: The problem of reserves is hard to estimate. Last year the English divisions were composed of 12 battalions; today they have only 9. It depends greatly on the condition of economic interests. After the defeat in March, for instance, England had to enlist the miners; if now, because of the lack of coal, she has to withdraw those men again, the front would naturally be weakened thereby. Political considerations also play their part; up to now they have not been able to enlist the Irish, because the compulsory service law can not be enforced there.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: So by next spring we can supply 600,000 to 700,000 men as reinforcements; the enemy 1,100,000, if I count only the Americans; and perhaps the Italians may be added to these. Will our situation thus become better or worse by spring?

General LUDENDORFF: According to the figures it will be no worse. But we must further consider the reaction of the evacuation on our economic situation. If we retire, the condition of our war industries will be impaired to the greatest degree. It could always be foreseen that, if we come out of the war with our present boundaries, we shall be in a far worse military-political and industrial position than we were before. An evacuation now would show the same results.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Your Excellency has up to the present spoken only of the man power; but there is also the equipment to consider, flying machines, tanks and other things.

General LUDENDORFF: The airmen of the two armies are at present in the ratio of about 1:3; nevertheless, the superiority lies with us. The reports of enemy losses issued by us put the figures far too low, as we are later often able to determine from the enemy's reports. All of this does not scare me.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: And the tanks next spring?

General LUDENDORFF: I hope that when our infantry recovers its strength, that the tank-panic, which was overcome once, but has now returned, can once more be vanquished. It reappeared with full strength on the 8th of August, on account of the fog and the Lord knows what else. But if the spirit of the troops is once restored, some branches of them, like the *Jäger* battalions and the *Gardeschützen*, will make a regular game of shooting down the tanks. It is also attractive for very practical reasons, for there are always good provisions in the tanks. We were unable to keep pace in the building of tanks because we were compelled to build auto trucks first; but by next spring we will be farther ahead with them.

Count ROEDERN: I take it for granted that, if we have a certain period for rest, the situation will improve; or does General Ludendorff's prediction still hold good if in the next two or three months we are compelled to retire fighting from our line on the western front?

General LUDENDORFF: That will depend on the pace; every retirement costs more in prisoners and material the more rapidly it is carried on. On the occasion of the slow retirement of the 3d, 1st, 7th and 18th Armies there were scarcely any sacrifices of men or equipment; but when we have to withdraw as in the case of the 17th and 2d Armies, it causes considerable weakness. We are making extraordinary retrenchments, but considerable difficulties arise with regard to the requirements of the Army, material, ammunition, etc., because our industrial districts are exposed to attack by enemy aviators.

Should armistice negotiations take place, our consent to evacuate would of itself indicate a serious aggravation of the military situation.

SCHEÜCH, Minister of War: It must be admitted that to withdraw the Army into our own country means to weaken it to an unusual degree, not only owing to the doubtful possibility of being able to provide the Army with all its needs to carry on the war, but also with regard to the morale and conduct of the troops. Close contact with the home population, which is itself depressed as a result of the association with the men already quartered on them, will depress the Army. The same conditions—and worse—that exist today in Alsace will obtain along the whole border. Even the standard of living of the people itself will become very much lowered.

Admiral SCHEER: I already reported yesterday what the situation is in

the Navy, but I must give you here some idea of the conditions in the Fleet, as having some reference to whether or not we should accept an armistice under the conditions imposed by Wilson.

During the past two years the Fleet has devoted itself solely to the service of the U-Boat war, and meanwhile has kept itself in good fighting trim. If labor conditions could be improved, we could increase the construction of U-Boats twofold, yes, threefold. Now Wilson's demands require that we cease from the U-Boat war. If we give in to him, we shall sacrifice a very material means of pressure as well as a counter-concession for the acceptance of an armistice under existing conditions. For after all, the situation is such that the Army can hold its ground. Therefore it is not necessary for us to agree to Wilson's second condition.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: At one time Your Excellency spoke of the need for 40,000 laborers. Can you get these if the Minister of War calls 600,000 men to arms?

Admiral SCHEER: Up to the 1st of December we only need from 15,000 to 16,000 men.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: And when shall you need the 40,000?

Admiral SCHEER: Not before the summer. Even with the first 16,000 men we could increase the monthly launching figure from 10 to 16.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Finally, I would like to be permitted to ask the following question:

When we have carried out all the measures that Your Excellency has proposed, and if the front holds out for the next few months, is Your Excellency of the opinion that we shall have created, during the course of the next year, a situation which is more favorable than the one in which we find ourselves at the present moment? We must clearly realize that every effort that we now put forth and that does not finally prove profitable, constitutes a wasteful expenditure of strength, and will create a situation the responsibility of which we shall have to bear, and which we must be ready to face. Will we be able to end the war next year on better terms than we can end it now?

General LUDENDORFF: Every exertion of our strength that is made at the present moment will improve our situation.

Admiral SCHEER: It is the general impression everywhere that the enemy feels the U-Boat war very acutely, especially Italy. That is a condition that will increase within a very short time, particularly with regard to America. But if we accept the terms that are offered us, we shall be throwing this advantage away.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: That does not answer the question that I asked: should we be able to bring the war to an end on better terms, if we accede to the wishes of the Supreme Army Command? It is not now the question of a reply to Wilson's note.

Admiral SCHEER: Our situation would be improved, while that of the enemy would be made worse. It is for that reason that our opponents are determined to bring the struggle to an end this very fall.

Count ROEDERN: It has so often been stated that the standard of living of our enemies has been lowered, yet we have had little occasion to remark that that fact has affected the war. Will that be so very different now? Is it being taken into consideration that we shall suffer the loss of the coast of Flanders, that Austria is on the point of making peace, and that as a result of the latter fact we shall lose our U-Boat bases in the Mediterranean? Can the increase of U-Boat production make up for that loss?

Admiral SCHEER: The loss of the U-Boat bases both in Flanders and in the Mediterranean would, in my opinion and that of my collaborators, have no effect on our U-Boat war. On the contrary, the more we concentrate in the neighborhood of the British Isles, the more effective the war will be. Up to the present time we have kept open the passage to England, although only with great exertion.

Of course, I can not say that at such and such a time the enemy will collapse. It will depend on increasing the effects that are already evident, and on keeping the enemy under constant pressure. Then the political effect will soon begin to show itself.

Count ROEDERN: The naval authorities have been accused—of course, as the result of misunderstandings—of having made distinct promises with regard to the effect of the U-Boat war; but one promise they certainly did make, and that was that they could prevent the transport of American troops. And certainly this promise has not been kept. The Secretary of State of the Imperial Naval Office at that time replied to a question on the subject something as follows: "Just let the American troops come; they will constitute welcome targets for us." But that has been shown to be an absolute error.

And are, then, the effects on the English economic situation to be estimated so highly? As soon as the Americans determine to send instead of 250,000 men, only 150,000 men across every month, the provisioning of England will be made materially easier. There must be some miscalculation here. Can it be that the speed of American ship-building has been underestimated?

Admiral SCHEER: I know of the statement of the Secretary of State only from the newspapers. I only know that he did not estimate the American troops very highly, probably because he thought their maintenance on French soil would be a difficult matter. We cannot set U-Boats against troop-transport ships alone, they must make use of their torpedoes where they can destroy the greatest amount of tonnage.

(The Imperial Chancellor turns the chair over to the Vice Chancellor.)

Vice Chancellor VON PAYER: The impression made by the military situa-

tion is materially more favorable today than it was at the beginning of the month. Are the reasons for this of a military character?

General LUDENDORFF: At the front, it is due to the unsuccessful attack of the enemy of yesterday and the day before yesterday. The enemy did not make a big enough bite at it. If he had done everything that he could have done, we should have been beaten. At this point the fighting ability of the Entente was not displayed at its usual height.

Another reason is that the Americans are hard hit by gripe. It is true, it is beginning to rage in our lines, too, and, at that, in a very serious form. Our troops are weary, and a tired man succumbs to contagion more easily than a vigorous man.

(The Imperial Chancellor again takes the chair.)

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: So the situation is no longer the same as it was on the 5th of October, when we were persuaded to make a peace offer to Wilson.

General LUDENDORFF: I am under the impression that before accepting the conditions of this note, which are too severe, we should say to the enemy: Win such terms by fighting for them.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: And when they have won them, will they not impose worse conditions?

General LUDENDORFF: There can be no worse conditions.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR: Oh, yes, they can invade Germany and lay waste the country.

General LUDENDORFF: Things have not gone that far yet.

Count ROEDERN: Up to the present we have only discussed the possibilities of victory or defeat. There is a third possibility: we might retire slowly. That is what is most likely, if we do not have to fear that the enemy will break through. Nor do I consider it probable that we can drive the enemy back. So, assuming that we retire, that we fill our ranks, that our power of defense is increased, would America then be tempted to offer us better terms? America knows that we are using up our last reserves; she will bide her time.

General LUDENDORFF: What is the situation in other countries? I have a report from an agent that in England and in France they are seriously afraid that if the war lasts another month, Germany will bring the Entente to a stand while yet on enemy territory. They are very much afraid of a reversal of the present position.

Secretary of State SOLF: I have the responsibility of advising the Imperial Chancellor on the matter of the text and tone in which the note which we are to send to Wilson is to be drafted. For this task I am hardly better prepared by the explanations of His Excellency Ludendorff than I was before.

At the beginning of this month the political administration of the Em-

pire was urged by the Supreme Army Command to beg our opponents for an armistice and to propose peace. Against his will and against his convictions, the Imperial Chancellor was forced to decide to accept responsibility for this move. Then came the counter-questions, and even then the conviction was adhered to that in our answer we should simply keep to the conditions we had proposed. Now an answer from Wilson has arrived which puts us face to face with the most serious of decisions, and at once the picture undergoes a change—showing that we can now hold our own, that if we can survive the next four weeks, we shall even be in a much better position than before.

This seems to me an absolute riddle. What is the real reason, a thing can be done now which a short while ago was declared to be impossible?

General LUDENDORFF: I have always represented the lack of men to be the chief obstacle. Today I hear that the scarcity is not as great as I had assumed. Today I hear that within a reasonable time I can get 600,000 men. Why I was unable to get them earlier, I will not discuss. If I can get them now, the isolation of the Army will come to an end. In spite of unfortunate events, the situation will change, because the enemy's fighting strength will fail at the same time.

I believe now as before, that if it is in any way possible, we must bring about negotiations for an armistice. But we should only enter upon such armistice negotiations as will permit an orderly evacuation of the country—consequently a respite of at least two or three months. Further we should not accept any conditions that would appear to make the resumption of hostilities impossible. That this is the intention, we cannot fail to see from the note. The terms are meant to put us out of the fight. Before we go any further, the enemy must state, then, what his terms actually are.

We should not break off with Wilson abruptly. On the contrary say: "Just tell us, what are we to do, anyway? If you demand anything that is contrary to our national honor, if you want to render us incapable of fighting, then the answer is certainly, No."

Nor by that am I changing my previous stand. I only ask that the measure proposed by the Minister of War be rapidly carried out.

Secretary of State SOLF: But surely this measure was also taken into consideration at that time.

General LUDENDORFF: Since April, and even before that, I have been fighting for men. They were not given to me. It is certainly a fact that we are falling 70,000 men short every month. If this deficiency is made good, and the fighting energy of the enemy declines, we do not need to accept all the terms.

(Discussion of other matters follows.)

NO. 58

CONFERENCE OF THE SECRETARIES OF STATE ON OCTOBER
17, 1918, AT 5 P.M.*Extract*

Present:

Their Excellencies von Payer, Friedberg, von Waldow, Haussmann, Groeber, Scheidemann, Scheüch, Solf, Count Roedern, Wahnschaffe; Director Deutelmoser, Privy Councilor Simons and Privy Councilor von Schlieben, Colonel von Haeften.

Later: His Highness the Imperial Chancellor, His Excellency Ludendorff, Colonel Heye.

VON PAYER, upon the entry of General Ludendorff with Colonel Heye, asks the former how our military position will probably be affected by the disaster which may be expected in Austria.

LUDENDORFF: According to information received by General Cramon, the spirit of the Austrian Army is extraordinarily good. The loss of Austria would naturally have a very unfavorable effect; whether it would have such an effect on our troops, however, is very doubtful, as the defection of Bulgaria made no particular impression on them. *At the same time he would advocate, in consideration of the anticipated defection of Austria, the continuation of the peace negotiations. Nevertheless, he did not view the situation in Austria in a light that would make it compulsory for us to accept any terms that might be offered. The Italian army would, of course, be liberated by Austria's defection; that was naturally serious. But in any case, there would always be time to make concessions little by little.*

COUNT ROEDERN would like to know whether there is not a real fear in military quarters that possibly one of the new states of Austria might take the field against us, and whether we ought not to take measures to protect ourselves against such a contingency.

LUDENDORFF does not consider that danger to be very great from a military point of view; on the other hand, the defection of Austria is economically a very serious matter, inasmuch as Bavaria and Saxony could get no more lignite from there.

VON PAYER: Would it not be possible that, if fresh military disasters take place, we might no longer be able to hold the front, and then should have to conclude peace immediately?

LUDENDORFF: If the front were so protected that we had absolutely nothing to fear, the move would not have been made by us at all. He has just expressly stated again, *that the peace move should be continued.* We might perhaps be compelled to retire still further. He does not fear a catastrophe, however. But if the situation should become worse, the action

that had been initiated should be continued. At present the situation should be viewed a little more calmly as a result of the recent military events. If we should actually be beaten, then we should have to capitulate at once. It might be dangerous if we were to suffer a defeat at Verdun, otherwise he does not consider the danger especially great.

SOLF: The question is, Can we return a somewhat more forceful answer, one corresponding in a greater degree with our dignity, even at the risk of Wilson's breaking off negotiations? Dare we be responsible for this?

LUDENDORFF: Yes, we can take the responsibility.

SCHEÜCH calls attention to the fact that the reserve troops he has promised can only be supplied little by little, to which His Excellency Ludendorff agrees, and only asks him for 75,000 men at once.

Count ROEDERN mentions that Colonel Heye had stated a short time ago that we might hold the front until spring, but that a break through might occur any day. A few days ago the possibility of a break through the line had hung on a thread; the troops had no longer any chance to rest.

LUDENDORFF: By retiring we shall spare the troops, as the front will become shorter.

If we introduce a sharper tone into our new note and Wilson breaks with us, we shall see that he had never been dealing honestly with us.

The IMPERIAL CHANCELOR disputes this last assertion. According to the information received, Wilson wants peace, but is being pressed by England and by France.

We must realize that if we reply to his note in the manner suggested, Wilson will then impose severe terms.

LUDENDORFF advocates that we demand of Wilson a clear statement as to the conditions. The note must serve as a test to find out whether he is dealing honestly and whether he has the power of carrying out his own will.

VON WALDOW calls attention to the fact that the distribution of food supplies has been greatly interfered with by the large number of troop trains being sent to the front, and that it cannot be endured for any length of time.

LUDENDORFF remarks that he has already talked over this matter with the Chief of Military Railways, and hopes that the situation will soon show improvement.

Colonel HEYE explains his previous remarks. It is his opinion that the situation in general has not been materially altered; the Army requires rest, and the sooner this can be had, so much the better. When the Supreme Army Command decided to make peace proposals, it acted on the supposition that an honorable peace could be concluded. Now for the first time it is evident that it is a case of "to be or not to be." Consequently the situation must be examined to see whether it is possible to resume the decisive struggle once more. The uncertainty of the situation exists today, so far as the Supreme Army Command is concerned. Nobody could guar-

antee that the 18th Army would not suffer a severe defeat, but for the past eight days things have gone well. In any case, our opponents would continue to make powerful attacks, but their strength is on the wane—that is evident from the fighting. They will continue in their attempt to defeat us, with the aid of their artillery and their numerous tanks. A great loss of men would result from it. If we should withdraw fighting, the country would have to be devastated, for a safety zone would have to be created between us and our opponents.

It is possible that the enemy would attack in Lorraine, an attack for which preparation is already in progress.

The situation is serious, but not hopeless. The morale of the Army would be improved if our offer were rejected by the Entente; this would tend to increase our moral strength. We would have to accept a fight to the end if the terms offered us were dishonorable terms.

The prospect of holding the front in Alsace is a good one. The first line is composed of experienced troops, the second, to be sure, only of troops worn out by action. Consequently it depends solely on how long the battle in that region should last.

LUDENDORF: The effect of good training in time of peace is showing itself there. The older men show the value of good training in time of peace, so that he feels confident that the Alsace and the Lorraine fronts would hold. It must be remembered, too, that the troops of the Entente are very much exhausted by fighting.

His Excellency Ludendorff and Colonel Heye then leave the meeting.

NO. 59

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

BRUSSELS, October 17, 1918, 11.10 p.m.

On the 10th of October, on the strength of the statements of a reliable agent, I reported that Wilson would reply in such a fashion to our anticipated answer consenting to his terms as to indicate his intention of not signing a peace with an autocracy. His further tactics will be aimed at bringing about the abdication of His Majesty the Emperor and the renunciation of the throne by the Crown Prince.

Yesterday, after Wilson's reply of the fifteenth had been made public, this same person said to me:

You see that I was correctly informed. I can tell you that the two chief points (the elimination of despotism and the maintenance of the

present superiority of the Allied armies), without the fulfilment of which the President will permit no armistice, are to be interpreted as follows:

1. Previous abdication of the throne by His Majesty the Emperor and the Crown Prince. Perhaps a regency would be possible by that brother of the Crown Prince who has been trained for the civil service. Do not permit yourselves to be forced to acceptance, step by step. That will mean the loss of time, and you will be playing into the hands of the French and the English. *These latter absolutely want to invade Germany*, a plan to which Wilson attaches no value. *An attacking movement*, more powerful than any that have preceded, especially in material (tanks) but also in troops, particularly of the carefully economized reserves of Foch, is already prepared, and is to commence on the 1st of November. The Entente has information concerning the condition of the German Armies which gives the Allies reason for complete assurance concerning the result of this offensive.

2. Plain evidence of the superiority of the Entente troops, in part from the fact that the occupation of Metz is conceded to these troops without, to be sure, anticipating in so doing the future adjustment of the question of dominion.

LANCKEN.

NO. 60

IMPERIAL AND ROYAL AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMBASSY

Confidential Notification

In connection with the note sent to Germany by President Wilson, Count Burian would like once more to suggest for your consideration the consequences of a possible refusal:

1. The possibility of interference on the part of Bulgaria and Roumania.
2. The retirement of Turkey.
3. The entry of the Entente fleet into the Black Sea.
4. An invasion by the eastern army of the Entente of Bosnia and thence into Croatia.
5. A successful offensive of the Entente in the southwest coincident with the rolling up of the western front.

Owing to these circumstances a catastrophe might result, should Germany, in the event of the collapse of the negotiations, permit the continuation of the struggle.

BERLIN, October 18, 1918.

NO. 61

BERLIN, *October 18, 1918.*

Mr. von Hintze telephones me that General Ludendorff announces that the position he took yesterday evening has not been altered by today's military events.

VON STUMM.

NO. 62

BERLIN, *October 18, 1918.*

To the Minister of War.

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I have been turning over in my mind the question that we discussed orally yesterday. I must stand by my opinion, namely, that the Army chiefs must be heard, even at the risk that Hindenburg and Ludendorff should consider the consultation of the Army chiefs an occasion for handing in their resignations. I am confirmed in this conviction by *intimations from a most impartial source, according to which the hopes expressed yesterday by General Ludendorff are not shared even by his entourage.* The decision is of too much importance, can be too fateful, to be left to two men. We are under obligation to do everything in our power, and not to neglect anything which might lead us to the right conclusion. Hindenburg and Ludendorff cannot insist upon resigning in the present state of affairs, and if they were to do so, the impression feared by you and some of my colleagues can be combated and the true cause of their retirement can easily be made plain.

The interrogation of the Army chiefs should naturally not take place before dispatching our present note to Wilson, but after Wilson has replied to it.

With the expression of my most respectful regard for Your Excellency, I am, etc.

SOLF,
Secretary of State.

NO. 63

TELEPHONE MESSAGE OF OCTOBER 20, 1918, 1 A.M.

TO THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR (transmitted by Colonel von Haeften):

The situation has not changed. Turkey has commenced separate negotiations. Austria-Hungary will follow soon. We shall very soon stand alone in Europe. The western front is showing the greatest tension. A

break through is possible, although I do not fear it. By breaking off with the enemy in Belgium and by bringing up the promised reserves, a durable resistance might be organized which would protract the fight on the western front for some time, and, though it would not bring us a decisive victory, yet would prevent the worst. But even if we should be beaten, we should not really be worse off than if we were to accept everything at present.

The question must be asked: Will the German people fight for their honor, not only in words but with deeds, to the last man, and thereby assure themselves of the possibility of a new existence, or will they allow themselves to be forced to capitulate and thus delivered to destruction *before* making their last and final exertion?

By the sacrifice of the U-Boat war without any counter-concession, as agreed to by the note, we are adopting the latter course.

We should, in addition, most unfavorably influence the spirit of the Army, sorely tried by heavy fighting. Therefore, on this point, I cannot agree to the note. If the Government should adopt the attitude that it must reckon with Wilson's breaking off negotiations, it must also be determined to fight on to the bitter end for the sake of our honor.

In spite of the unusually serious situation of the Army, I can see no other way out, and I firmly hope that the Government will have the whole Fatherland behind it in coming to this serious determination.

In detail, I suggest the following alterations in the text forwarded to me:

1. Paragraph 3 should read: "In war activities destructions will always be necessary and are permitted by international law."

2. Paragraph 5, after the words: "be cleared up" there should be added: "It has already instituted inquiries by such neutral commissions, for instance, at Tournai, Valenciennes and other places. The evidence gathered by these commissions has shown that the accusations of violation of international law are incorrect."

VON HINDENBURG,
Field Marshal.

NO. 64

THE THIRD GERMAN NOTE

BERLIN, *October 20, 1918.*

In accepting the proposal for an evacuation of the occupied territories the German Government has started from the assumption that the procedure of this evacuation and of the conditions of an armistice should be left to the judgment of the military advisers and that the actual standard of

power on both sides in the field has to form the basis for arrangements safeguarding and guaranteeing this standard. The German Government leaves it to the President to bring about an opportunity for fixing the details. It trusts that the President of the United States will approve of no demand which would be irreconcilable with the honor of the German people and with opening a way to a peace of justice.

The German Government protests against the reproach of illegal and inhumane actions made against the German land and sea forces and thereby against the German people.

For the covering of a retreat, destruction will always be necessary and is on that account permitted by international law. The German troops are under the strictest instructions to spare private property and to exercise care for the population to the best of their ability. Where transgressions occur in spite of these instructions the guilty are being punished.

The German Government further denies that the German Navy in sinking ships has ever purposely destroyed lifeboats with their passengers.

The German Government proposes with regard to all these charges that the facts be cleared up by neutral commissions.

In order to avoid anything that might hamper the work of peace, the German Government has caused orders to be dispatched to all submarine commanders precluding the torpedoing of passenger ships, without, however, for technical reasons, being able to guarantee that these orders will reach every single submarine at sea before its return.

As the fundamental conditions for peace, the President characterizes the destruction of every arbitrary power that can separately, secretly and of its own single choice disturb the peace of the world. To this the German Government replies: Hitherto the representation of the people in the German Empire has not been endowed with an influence on the formation of the Government. The Constitution did not provide for a concurrence of the representation of the people in decision on peace and war. These conditions have just now undergone a fundamental change. The new Government has been formed in complete accord with the wishes of the representation of the people, based on the equal, universal, secret, direct franchise. The leaders of the great parties of the Reichstag are members of this Government. In future no Government can take or continue in office without possessing the confidence of the majority of the Reichstag. The responsibility of the Chancellor of the Empire to the representation of the people is being legally developed and safeguarded. The first act of the new Government has been to lay before the Reichstag a bill to alter the Constitution of the Empire so that the consent of the representatives of the people is required for decisions on war and peace.

The permanence of the new system is, however, guaranteed not only by constitutional safeguards, but also by the unshakable determination of the

German people, whose vast majority stands behind these reforms and demands their energetic continuance.

The question of the President, with whom he and the Governments associated against Germany as dealing, is therefore answered in a clear and unequivocal manner by the statement that the offer of peace and an armistice has come from a Government which, free from every arbitrary and irresponsible influence, is supported by the approval of the overwhelming majority of the German people.

SOLF,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

NO. 65

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN GENERAL LUDENDORFF AND COLONEL VON HAEFTEN

Very urgent.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 21, 1918.*

In order to remove if possible the difficulties which had arisen for the administration, I endeavored to work out an additional clause concerning the U-Boats. I asked His Excellency von Hintze and General von Bartenwerfer to submit a proposal for the adjustment of this dispute. As Colonel von Haeften has just informed me that the note has been forwarded, there is nothing left for me to do but to bring to your knowledge the draft submitted to me by these two officers.

After the second paragraph in relation to the U-Boats, the following should have been inserted:

The President of the United States of America will see from these instructions issued to the U-Boats that this obstacle to an understanding, mentioned by him, has also been removed. But the President should nevertheless realize that by allowing passenger-vessels to pass, which, as has been proved, also serve the purposes of war, the German Government, in the interest of humanity and for the prevention of further bloodshed, has relinquished a weapon which it was forced to employ by England on account of a blockade contrary to the law of nations and claiming thousands of guiltless victims—women and children. The German people will find it impossible to dispense with a weapon forced upon it by its foe in a struggle for life or death against its numerous enemies, if some equivalent is not supplied at once by the inauguration of a general armistice. Thus, for reasons of equity and self-preservation, the German Government will be forced to have recourse to this weapon again, unless an armistice goes into effect within a brief period.

LUDENDORFF.

BERLIN, *October 20, 1918.*

Respectfully submitted to His Excellency Dr. Solf, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

VON HAEFTEN,
Colonel.

October 20, 1918.

The note has already gone forward. The additional clause would have been impossible, however.

SOLF.

NO. 66

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

MUNICH, *October 20, 1918.*

I deem it my duty to warn you urgently against drawing your conclusions as to the actual state of public feeling from the reserved tone of the whole press. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority of the people want nothing but peace.

TREUTLER.

DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO THE U-BOAT WAR COVERING THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 10 TO OCTOBER 24, 1918—NOS. 67 TO 75

NO. 67

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

BERLIN, *October 10, 1918.*

TO THE IMPERIAL CHANCELOR:

Captain von Horn of the Admiralty Staff informs me that the U-Boat cruisers are to be recalled from the American coast.

BARON VON DEM BUSSCHE.

NO. 68

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

Confidential.

BERNE, *October 11, 1918.*

In case our reply should be in the nature of a compliance, X takes an optimistic view of the further development of the Wilson negotiations. But he is very much disturbed by the thought that perhaps this development may be interfered with in some unfortunate fashion by the activities of our U-Boats on the American coast. There is the danger, if bad luck will have it so, that during this very time the news might arrive that American passenger steamers with United States citizens on board had been sunk, and Wilson would not then be able to stand up against the storm of resentment that would ensue. X therefore urges that, in addition to making known that an attempt has been made to get into communication with those submarine commanders who are at sea, in order to tell them to spare passenger steamers, we should also make an attempt to guard against this danger.

It is important, furthermore, that the answer to Wilson's note should receive the approval of the Reichstag at the earliest moment possible, as this would at the same time mean something like a vote of confidence, in the new Government, which is lacking at present.

ROMBERG.

NO. 69

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

BERNE, *October 12, 1918.*

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE:

The one thing above all which might now bring about serious complications would be the sinking at this particular juncture by a U-Boat of a vessel carrying American passengers, etc. In view of the bad luck with which our Navy seems generally to be pursued, this eventuality does not seem to be impossible. A telegram in this connection was sent yesterday by the Minister to the Foreign Office.

Your Excellency's most devoted,
X.

NO. 70

TELEGRAM

BERLIN, *October 12, 1918.*

TO THE BERNE LEGATION:

Your Excellency may confidentially inform those concerned that the Imperial Government has already made the attempt to communicate an order to its naval forces to refrain from now on from sinking any vessels on the American coast. However, in view of the technical difficulties of communicating the order, no guaranty can be given that it will reach our U-Boats in time.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

NO. 71

TELEPHONE MESSAGE OF OCTOBER 16, 1918, 7.01 P.M.

Sent from the Dresden Press Department.

They have received here a report to the following effect: The English Government asserts that it has evidence in its possession according to which the torpedoing of the *Leinster* occurred as the result of orders calling for the sinking of passenger steamers in that locality and issued, in fact, since the initiation of the German peace move. This evidence was placed at the disposal of President Wilson before he sent his reply.

Respectfully forwarded for the information of the Foreign Office.

I heard from a reliable source that about fourteen days ago an order calling for increased activity in the U-Boat war was issued to the Navy.
SOLF.

According to information from the Admiralty Staff (Captain Horn), the accompanying report is devoid of any foundation.

To be submitted to His Excellency Under-Secretary of State von Stumm.

HANIEL.

NO. 72

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Ambassador to the Foreign Office

VIENNA, October 21, 1918.

Naval attaché reports that this Government has put a stop to the U-Boat war.

WEDEL.

NO. 73

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

Private.

For Minister Haniel.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, October 24, 1918.

I hear very confidentially from private sources that all U-Boats have been recalled.

LERSNER.

NO. 74

CHIEF OF THE ADMIRALTY STAFF OF THE NAVY.

Absolutely confidential.

BERLIN, October 24, 1918.

At the request of the Naval Command, the text of the order sent to the U-Boats is attached and transmitted to Your Excellency:

Return at once. Mercantile war in every form forbidden because of negotiations now in progress. U-Boats on the return trip only to attack war-ships during daytime. End.

Admiral.

The Chief of the Admiralty Staff, Admiral Scheer, gave instructions at the same time that this text should be transmitted to Your Excellency personally.

VON TROTHA,
Deputy.

To the Imperial Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Privy Councilor,
His Excellency Dr. Solf, City.

NO. 75

TELEGRAM

Absolutely confidential.

BERLIN, *October 25, 1918.*

TO THE MINISTER AT BERNE:

Kindly give the absolutely confidential information to the President that all U-Boats have received orders to return, and to refrain from every kind of mercantile war on account of the negotiations with the President.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

FROM WILSON'S THIRD NOTE TO THE REPLY THERE TO—NOS. 76 TO 85

NO. 76

WILSON'S THIRD NOTE OF OCTOBER 23, 1918¹

Having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the² terms of peace laid down in his address to the Congress of the United States on the eighth of January, 1918, and the principles of settlement³ enunciated in his subsequent addresses, particularly the address of the twenty-seventh of September, and that it desires to discuss the details of⁴ their application, and that this wish and purpose emanate, not from those who have hitherto dictated German policy and conducted the present war on Germany's behalf, but from ministers who speak for the majority of the Reichstag and for an overwhelming majority of the German people; and having received also the explicit⁵ promise of the present German Government that the humane rules of civilized warfare will be observed both on land and sea by the German armed forces, the President of the United States feels that he can not decline to take up with the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated the question of an armistice.

He deems it his duty to say again, however, that the only armistice he would feel justified in submitting for consideration would be one which should leave the United States and the Powers associated with her in a position to enforce any arrangements that may be entered into and to make a renewal of hostilities on the part of Germany impossible.

The President has, therefore, transmitted his correspondence with the present German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, if those governments are disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments

¹ Official English text, showing deviations in the retranslation from the German.

² The word "preliminary" is here inserted in the German text.

³ The words "of peace" are here inserted in the German text.

⁴ Instead of the words "the details of," the German text has "the initiatory measures and."

⁵ Instead of the word "explicit," the German text has "further."

the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce¹ the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible from the military point of view. Should such terms of armistice be suggested, their acceptance by Germany will afford the best concrete evidence of her unequivocal acceptance of the terms and principles of peace from which the whole action proceeds.²

The President would deem himself lacking in candor did he not point out in the frankest possible terms the reason why extraordinary safeguards must be demanded. Significant and important as the constitutional changes seem to be which are spoken of by the German Foreign Secretary in his note of the twentieth of October, it does not appear that the principle³ of a government responsible to the German people has yet been fully worked out or that any guaranties either exist or are in contemplation that the alterations of principle and of practice now partially agreed upon will be permanent.⁴ Moreover, it does not appear that the heart of the present difficulty has been reached. It may be that future wars have⁵ been brought under the⁶ control of the German people,⁶ but the present war has not been; and it is with the present war that we are dealing. It is evident that the German people have no means of commanding the acquiescence of the military authorities of the Empire in the popular will; that the power of the King of Prussia to control the policy of the Empire is⁷ unimpaired; that the determining initiative still remains with those who have hitherto been the masters of Germany.

Feeling that the whole peace of the world depends now on plain speaking and straightforward action, the President deems it his duty to say, without any attempt to soften what may seem harsh words, that the nations of the world do not and can not trust the word of those who have hitherto been the masters of⁸ German policy, and to point out once more that in concluding peace and attempting to undo the infinite injuries and injustices of this war the Government of the United States can not deal with any but veritable⁹ representatives of the German people who have been assured of a genuine constitutional standing as the real rulers of Germany.¹⁰

¹ The words "and enforce" do not appear in the German text.

² Instead of the sentence "Should . . . proceeds," the German retranslation reads: "The acceptance of these armistice conditions by Germany will offer the best concrete evidence that it accepts the conditions and principles of peace from which the whole action proceeds."

³ Retranslation: "principles."

⁴ Instead of the words "has . . . permanent," the German retranslation reads: "have already been completely accepted or that a guaranty exists or is contemplated so that the change of system and the execution of the measures concerning which a partial agreement has now been reached will be permanent."

⁵ The word "now" is here inserted in the German text.

⁶ The words "the" and "of the German people" are omitted from the German text.

⁷ The word "still" is here inserted in the German text.

⁸ Instead of the words "been the masters of," the retranslation reads "controlled."

⁹ Retranslation: "such."

¹⁰ Instead of the words "who . . . Germany," the retranslation reads: "who offer

If it must deal with the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany now, or if it is likely to¹ have to deal with them later in regard to the² international obligations of the German Empire, it must demand, not peace negotiations, but surrender. Nothing can be gained by leaving this essential thing unsaid.³

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

ROBERT LANSING.

NO. 77
TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

For the Imperial Chancellor.
Confidential.

MUNICH, October 25, 1918.

I am fulfilling a painful duty in informing Your Highness that here, in Bavaria, Wilson's answer, which was made public yesterday evening, is interpreted by those qualified to judge, as making in its final paragraph a direct attack on the person of our Emperor. The Prime Minister and the Minister of War are of the opinion that the wording of the note permits of no other interpretation; by its guarded manner of expression it is supposed purely and simply to offer us the opportunity of taking the painful step of our own free will. In any case, the gentlemen referred to advocate that His Majesty be frankly informed that the enemy will consent to no acceptable peace unless the great sacrifice is made. Should His Majesty then renounce his Imperial rights, he would only be acting in the spirit of his twenty-six years of work for peace and so crown his endeavors. His figure would live on in history as that of the most great-hearted, the noblest and most self-sacrificing benefactor of the German nation.

Count Lerchenfeld is receiving similar instructions.

TREUTLER.

¹ Instead of the words "If it must . . . to," the retranslation reads: "If the military masters and monarchical autocrats of Germany are to be dealt with now it can and must be anticipated that we shall also."

² The words "settlement of" are here inserted in the German text.

³ Instead of the words "it must demand . . . unsaid," the retranslation reads: "Then Germany will not be able to negotiate about peace conditions but will have to surrender. These essential things cannot remain unsaid."

better guaranties for a genuine constitutional standing than the rulers of Germany have shown up to the present."

NO. 78

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

Confidential.

BERNE, October 25, 1918.

Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg requests me to forward the following telegram:

Prince Max von Baden, Berlin.
Personal.

I have just learned from a reliable source that the conclusion of the Wilson note refers to nothing less than the abdication of the Kaiser as the only way to a peace which is more or less tolerable. It appears that Wilson recognizes that the monarchical form of government corresponds both to the history and the requirements of the German nation, but the representations made, both in America itself and throughout all the Entente countries with regard to the personality of the Emperor, the rôle he has played during the war and his influence on the conduct of internal and foreign policies, Wilson is no longer able to disregard. According to the opinion of my confidential informant, such an act on the part of the Emperor would render it easier for Wilson to influence the Senate in favor of his peace plans, as that body has of late been leaning toward the idea of a total overthrow of Germany. At the same time it would also add strength to the feeling in favor of peace in the other Entente nations. This would assure the retention of the dynasty, which, like all the German dynasties, would be endangered, if—and the Entente would undoubtedly take pains to see to it—the belief could be aroused that peace negotiations had come to nothing on account of the Emperor.

According to my confidential informant, moreover, the weakness of our military situation is too well known to the Americans to permit any doubt of the eventual victory of the Entente to arise among them, even in the case of an appeal for national defense. Our collapse is considered to be only a matter of time. If an attempt should be made to protract the final struggle, that would only be regarded as fresh evidence of the preponderance of military influence, and would nourish the suspicion that the entire change of our internal policy is not to be depended on.

Painful as it is for me, I hold it to be my duty to give you this information personally in view of the immense magnitude of the determination to be arrived at. My informant is to be taken with the utmost seriousness, both on account of his standing and his connections.

Ernst Hohenlohe.

The preceding telegram is based on information given by my confidential informant.

ROMBERG.

NO. 79

MEMORANDUM

BERLIN, *October 25, 1918.*

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE:

Mr. von Lersner telephones me that the Supreme Army Command, which is to hold a meeting this afternoon with Mr. von Hintze, is absolutely "wild", and will insist on the rejection of the Wilson armistice. On the strength of his long years of experience at General Headquarters and of his own observation of the present military situation as well as on the strength of information that had come to him, he can only give the *most urgent* warning against granting credence to any possible promises of the Supreme Army Command, or permitting ourselves to be diverted to the least degree from the peace policy we have adopted. The military situation is at least as hopeless now as it was three weeks ago, as no improvement can be expected and it is only a question of weeks before the enemy will be on our soil.

To my question as to what effect a change in the Supreme Army Command would have on the front, Mr. von Lersner said that with a portion of the Army the effect would perhaps be *unfavorable*, but with the greater portion *favorable*, as the men had lost confidence in the present Supreme Army Command.

HANIEL.

NO. 80

Secret.

BERLIN, *October 25, 1918.*

At today's press conference, the Chief of the War Press Bureau read, by instruction of the Supreme Army Command, two telegrams from General Field Marshal von Hindenburg, for the confidential information of the representatives and to be spread by verbal propaganda, but not through the press.

The first of these telegrams was directed to the Imperial Chancellor and voiced a protest against reports that were going round to the effect that the General Field Marshal had made a personal demand for an immediate peace proposal and had indicated at the same time that it was but a matter of hours.

The second telegram was directed to the commanding generals and contained first a brief analysis of the Wilson armistice conditions. Then followed the declaration that they were *unacceptable* for the Army; therefore there remained nothing but a battle to the bitter end.

VON SCHMIDTHALS.

NO. 81

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

Confidential.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 26, 1918.*

Field Marshal von Hindenburg is said to have promulgated a general order to the Armies day before yesterday evening in which he describes the last Wilson note as degrading to Germany and gives orders for a fight to the finish.

The Gallwitz Army gave expression to its serious scruples concerning the contents. The Field Marshal thereupon withdrew the general order last evening. In one Army it is said already to have reached the battalion staffs.

LERSNER.

NO. 82

SESSION OF SECRETARIES OF STATE ON THE 26TH OF
OCTOBER, 1918

Present:

Their Excellencies von Payer, Count Roedern, Friedberg, Scheidemann, Trimborn, Groeber, Erzberger, Haussmann, Scheuch, Solf, Wahn-schaffe.

Extract

VON PAYER refers to his conference of yesterday with the gentlemen of the Supreme Army Command. They had sought to convince him that the negotiations should be broken off and the attempt should be made to call the people to arms by means of a proclamation. He took another standpoint. We would reply to the note to the effect that we were asking for information about the conditions. The gentlemen were of the opinion that we should negotiate no longer; our Army was standing unconquered on enemy soil, and could not capitulate. To his questions as to what chance we would have of acquiring a more favorable peace if we continued the fight, they gave him no direct explanations. They only stated that if we could hold out for a few months more, a stronger longing for peace would make its influence felt on the other side, especially in France, but also in England. We could also count on internal agitations in France. He did not concur with that opinion, pointing out, on the other hand, the serious conditions in Austria, and asking whether these might not be of disastrous effect for us. To that he received no reply. But he was requested to rest assured that,

if we were offered very unfavorable armistice conditions, we should bring about a rising of the people. He declined to be convinced of that, and on his side made the demand that other Army chiefs should be heard. This was declined by Hindenburg in a not very decided fashion, but by Ludendorff, on the contrary, most energetically.

SCHEÜCH supplements these observations by saying that the Supreme Army Command has instanced the coal famine among our enemies and the relaxation of their fighting power as favorable signs for us. The armies of Rupprecht and the German Crown Prince have repelled sharp attacks during the last few days. There exists a considerable difference of opinion between Clemenceau and Foch as to the terms that are to be imposed on us. The former advocates very severe demands, which Foch declines, showing that he estimates our fighting ability more highly. The gentlemen of the Supreme Army Command also referred particularly to a French opinion of the last few days to the effect that the German Armies are still holding their own very well, but that things would come to an end in France in four weeks, if matters continued as they were. Hindenburg even said: "We are out of the woods. Not only are our troops holding their own, but our opponents are undergoing considerable difficulties." "In fourteen days we can look further ahead, therefore we must gain time," was the conclusion of his remarks. Hindenburg admitted failures, but claimed they were not decisive.

He himself (Scheüch) had spoken in favor of hearing other generals on the situation, but the conference was broken off. He had the impression that if pressure were exercised, it might still be possible to arrange the hearing. Perhaps it might be held directly after forwarding the note, and, if need be, in two places at the front.

(Continued at 1.30 p.m.)

VON PAYER gives out the confidential information that His Majesty has accepted General Ludendorff's resignation, but, on the other hand, has persuaded His Excellency Hindenburg to remain in office.

(The discussion of the text of the note follows.)

NO. 83

TELEGRAM

The Emperor of Austria to the German Emperor

October 27, 1918.

DEAR FRIEND:

It is My duty, painful as it is, to inform You that My people are neither in condition nor are they willing to continue the war any further.

I have not the right to set Myself against their will, as I no longer cherish the hope of a successful outcome, for which both the moral and the technical preparations are lacking; and useless bloodshed would be a crime, which My conscience forbids.

Internal order and the monarchical principle are both in the greatest danger if we do not at once put an end to the struggle.

Even the most fervent sentiments of confederacy and the friendliest feelings must give way before the consideration that I must preserve the stability of those States whose fate Divine Providence has entrusted to Me.

Therefore I give You notice that I have come to the irrevocable determination to make proposals within twenty-four hours for a *separate peace* and for an immediate armistice.

I cannot do otherwise; My conscience as a ruler commands Me to do so.

In true friendship,

KARL.

NO. 84

TELEGRAM

BERLIN, *October 27, 1918.*

Addressed to Grüнау.

According to a report from Vienna, doubt exists there as to our willingness to go on with the peace move recently initiated. Reports tending in this direction may have been brought to the Emperor Karl and have influenced him to compose the telegram to His Majesty. Under these circumstances, I would recommend that a telegram be sent to the Emperor Karl which would have a quieting influence on him and would be adapted to keep him from taking too hasty a step. With this object in view, kindly make the proposal of the following draft to the Emperor:

Dear Friend: The announcement of your intention to propose a separate peace to our enemies has surprised me in the most painful fashion. By carrying out your idea, you would open the way for the plan of our opponents, which consists of subjecting our countries to their will and of realizing their antimonarchical aims all the more easily by dividing our realms.

Our people and our Governments desire a speedy peace. Toward this end my feelings are directed even as are your own; in its service I have made heavy personal sacrifices, for I gladly subordinate my personal interests to the welfare of my people. The move recently initiated in agreement with your Government is for the purpose of bringing about an armistice and an imminent peace; the negotiations are in progress and may lead to the desired result within a few days. The

cooperation of our Governments hitherto, the continuation of which does not appear to be impossible, would be endangered to the utmost by a separate move on the part of your Government at the present moment. Even the conditions of the armistice will become much more severe, if our opponents learn that our alliance has been broken. That will affect our realms to an equal degree. I therefore urgently beg you to refrain from taking any step that can give rise to the impression that we are no longer united.

The more firmly we stand together from now on, the better are the prospects that our opponents, who are likewise suffering severely beneath the burdens and the horrors of war, will agree to conditions of peace which will accord with the honor and the interests of our peoples.

I expect from you that you will at once cause your Government to continue, solely in full agreement with mine, the negotiations that have been initiated with the United States.

In true friendship,

Wilhelm.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

NO. 85

THE FOURTH GERMAN NOTE

The German Government has taken cognizance of the answer of the President of the United States. The President is aware of the far-reaching changes which have been carried out and are being carried out in the German constitutional structure, and that peace negotiations are being conducted by a People's Government, in whose hands rests, both actually and constitutionally, the power to make the deciding conclusions. The military powers are also subject to it. The German Government now awaits proposals for an armistice, which shall be the first step towards a just peace, as the President has described it in his proclamation.

SOLF,

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

FROM THE HEARING OF THE GENERALS TO WILSON'S FOURTH NOTE—NOS. 86 TO 101

NO. 86

SESSION OF THE SECRETARIES OF STATE ON OCTOBER 28,
1918, AT 10 P.M.

Present:

Their Excellencies von Payer, Friedberg, Count Roedern, von Mann, Groeber, Scheidemann, Erzberger, Trimborn, Wahnschaffe; Privy Councilors Simons, von Schlieben, von Stumm.

Generals VON MUDRA and VON GALLWITZ appear.

VON PAYER: It stands to reason that, in these critical days, we should feel the necessity of getting expert information from various quarters to enable us to estimate the situation. We should like to have the gentlemen inform us as to the military situation, the morale and the state of affairs generally in the Army, and also their personal opinion as to whether we should continue to fight in any case, and if so, with what prospect of success.

VON GALLWITZ: The Army has naturally suffered in the battles which have often lasted for months. Continuous offensives and movements to the rear have had their influence upon it. The effectives of the individual organizations have been greatly depleted. Nevertheless, these weakened divisions have recently been able to offer a good defense; the small number of fighters shows up less on the defensive than on the offensive. We are not at the moment capable of the latter form of action in battle, but we are capable of a sustained defense. Our opponents are superior in numbers. They are also very well led from a military point of view. On the other hand, our Army has shown countless examples of personal courage and of tenacious defensive power. The French themselves are also very much weakened. Their units have been depleted. The English are better off as to numbers, but their attacking power has sunk quite low. The Americans are notably fresh and are very strong in numbers. They put excellent human material into the first of the fighting, too; men in the twenties. These fine divisions, however, suffered enormous losses. The Americans are feeling these losses. Their spirits are not being raised by it. Their understanding of politics is dreadfully slight, but they are fresh and robust soldiers in their best years. It may be assumed, however, that the transports with reinforcements will now bring over the older classifications. The

American is an opponent worthy of great respect; but his verve for attack is greatly decreased at present as the result of serious losses. After being reinforced, however, he will unquestionably commence a new series of attacks.

Our forces have unquestionably held out well. There is still a strong spirit in our Army, and there are still many elements capable of defense. But the influence on morale coming from home has made itself very disagreeably felt; it is especially the length of the war and the situation of their relatives at home that have had an unfavorable effect on the power of resistance of our troops. In many cases, leave at home has likewise had a bad result. The men have often returned from their homes in a worse state of mind than that in which they left. And the fact that we have permitted newspapers of all political opinions to be freely distributed throughout the Army has also been proved to have a bad effect. A dangerous state of mind in relation to the continuation of the war, and especially in relation to the maintenance of discipline has made itself felt owing to war-weariness and the longing for peace influenced by recent political events. It is chiefly from individual units of the Army and from certain centers known to the Army Command, that this frame of mind emanates. In general it is exhibited by the relaxation of military behavior and of discipline; in battle, by the fact that these war-weary elements either lose their nerve or shirk. Poltroonery has assumed startling proportions, especially in forest-fighting. The internal structure of the Army has suffered through these influences, and the effect is very noticeable in connection with the superiority of numbers on the other side. Of recent occurrence is the unfavorable effect produced by our armistice proposal; also our agreement to the demand for evacuation.

Nevertheless, the Army could be restored to a condition capable of resistance, if certain strategic measures were undertaken and its morale were improved. The first thing to do is to provide for increased reinforcements; also, the country must be thoroughly sifted once more, not only for the purpose of getting recruits, but at the same time to satisfy the resentment in the Army, which feels that there are still plenty of men capable of military service shirking at home. The quality of the state of mind of the Army must be improved. In my opinion it would be necessary, in case we should come to the determination to continue fighting, to put forth a powerful appeal to the country and to the Army. This would also make a great impression on our enemies. The present continued request for an armistice has only given an impression of our weakness. The enemy too is well led and is provided with an excellent propaganda department. By means of the latter, a savage desire for war has been stirred up among the enemy. Following on our military failures there come these continuous pleas for an armistice. Such an impression of our weakness given the enemy can only

be counteracted by filling them with the conviction that we are not yet about to give up the ghost. A general appeal to the nation should be issued by all authorities in common, so that in form and distribution there must be no trace of a divergence of opinion. An appeal by the Emperor alone would not suffice, under the present circumstances. Large groups in the Army are of the opinion that the new Government should take the matter in hand. If it should come to the conclusion that we do not need to capitulate, which I should regard as a disaster, all differences between the Army and the people must be set aside, and a strong and vigorous appeal be issued to the nation and the Navy both by the old authorities and the new Government. This might be expected to have a good effect on the enemy. We must now make use of every means in our power to prove that we are not yet at the end of our rope.

General VON MUDRA agrees absolutely to this. There was no reason why we should give up all hope. The principal difficulty was that the Army was worn out. If we could arrange to get reinforcements enough to permit some of the divisions to get sleep, all would be well. Being continually put back into battle is sapping the life out of the troops. So what we need is further reinforcement, not only in quantity, but in quality. A general appeal to the nation and the Army should be issued by the Emperor and the Government at the same time, then the baser elements in the Army would be induced once more to offer up everything for the sake of the Fatherland. There is no need to capitulate for a long time. *Of course, matters would assume a different aspect, if Austria should become shaky.* In that case, naturally, convulsions might occur which would render it necessary for us to look somewhat earlier for the moment when we should have to make concessions to the enemy.

VON PAYER thanks both generals for their valuable explanations and asks them how long they think the glow of spirit and morale would last, and how long we should be able to continue the fight at all. What prospects would we have in case the war is continued, and when would the time arrive when we should have to surrender?

VON GALLWITZ: Naturally he can not name any particular time. Winter will soon be at hand; then we shall have a little more rest. But if we could hold out through the winter, we should obtain a more satisfactory peace. However, he believes a complete reversal of the state of affairs through an offensive on a large scale ending in complete victory to be no longer possible for us. We could, however, maintain a firm defensive. If the enemy should find that we are not to be conquered, he would arrive at a more sensible frame of mind. Nothing less than capitulation would be demanded of us in the present situation. Later demands could not well be worse than this.

He believes he would answer in the negative the question whether a glowing appeal would result in the breaking off of the negotiations. The

diplomatic wires could continue to be peacefully pulled. But they must not be permitted to influence the Army so openly as they had done up to the present.

VON PAYER emphasizes the fact that the armistice proposal was forced upon the Government by the Supreme Army Command; the Supreme Army Command has also expressly declared their agreement to the evacuation. He asks if we are not still exposed to the risk of disaster, if we continue fighting.

VON GALLWITZ: He can only say that he was very much astonished when the proposal for an armistice was made, and even more so by our agreement to the evacuation requirement. That it was necessary for us to negotiate was plain to him, but it was not necessary for us to make such broad concessions. It has had a very disquieting effect on the Army. The evacuation is equivalent to a complete surrender. If we retreat to the borders of the country, we would have to stop fighting, as otherwise our own country would be devastated. But at present we can still hold out.

VON MUDRA: If a further resistance on our part is to lead to our receiving worse treatment later, I, too, should advocate that we should bring our resistance to an end. But at present we must gain more time, in order to take a stand against a dishonorable peace. If dishonorable terms are offered now, then the appeal to the nation must certainly be made.

ERZBERGER: Do you gentlemen not believe that the effect of an appeal to the nation would be counterbalanced by the fact that the enemy is gaining strength? So that eventually the enemy will be able to break through? What value would the gentlemen attach to the defection of Austria?

VON MUDRA: If the Italians were then to come to France I should consider it a very serious matter, but that would take some time and the Italians will not be able to begin an attack so quickly. What we need above all things is to allow our Army to get a rest. If this is done the enemy could not defeat us or break through our lines.

VON GALLWITZ: So far as the enemy's increase of strength goes, that has already recently been brought to a halt as a result of the battle actions. The fighting strength of the French has materially decreased. Furthermore, the currents of feeling in favor of peace are making themselves felt in the enemy countries. Just at present, popular feeling has been raised to a higher pitch by their successes. The English army, it is true, is comparatively strong, but its capacity for exertion, also, has recently relaxed. If we stand firm on the defensive for a further period and can cause serious losses to the enemy, his increase of strength will be counterbalanced once more, so that we need not fear a catastrophe. He does not believe, however, that the balance of strength of the armies would undergo a material shift in our favor.

The situation would, of course, be quite changed by Austria's separate

peace. There were two possibilities in view; one, that although Austria would no longer continue to fight, she would yet undertake no unfriendly action against us, especially by permitting hostile troops to pass through her territories; or, on the other hand, that Austria would be compelled to permit this. In the latter case, which would be similar to that of Bulgaria, the Entente would cut us off from the Ukraine and Roumania. The Italian forces would in any case be transferred to the western front. That would be very serious, as our front in the Vosges is but weakly manned. This might prove the drop that would cause the keg to overflow.

HAUSSMANN: If the generals are of the opinion that we should break off negotiations and organize a *levée en masse*, we could then no longer continue our present negotiations with Wilson; or should we only break off when they impose dishonoring conditions on us?

VON GALLWITZ: If we issue an appeal to the nation, then a breaking off of the transactions with Wilson would be necessary, as otherwise it would appear nothing but a farce. Also in that case we should want to continue the fight on enemy soil, and thus have to withdraw the offer of evacuation. Consequently, first break off the present negotiations and then appeal to the nation. But first of all, wait for the answer and then come to our decision. However, the Supreme Army Command must make its preparations at once, in order that, if dishonoring proposals should be made, we can continue to fight.

SOLF tells of the latest events in Austria, especially the separate peace proposal, and reads the note, as already published abroad. The note means a separate peace, and will be equal to a capitulation. The consequences will be serious. Roumania would offer us no further advantages. Our south-German front will be endangered. The Italians will go to the western front and imperil that.

VON GALLWITZ: Notwithstanding all this, we cannot yet give up all hope; all these are but suppositions. We must first see how long we shall be able to hold out; things could not be worse. For the sake of the national honor, we can not stop so long as the Army retains any power of resistance.

GROEBER puts the question whether, in case dishonoring conditions are proposed to us, we should still be able to maintain a lasting resistance. For some time yet, certainly. But would it be common sense to say that we must continue to fight on, in the hope of more favorable terms? Should we not be offered terms even more unfavorable, if we broke off negotiations now? If we repulse Wilson, England and France will get the upper hand.

The question of the national honor is one that governs us all. Even the decision to evacuate fell very heavily on us, but we stood beneath the weight of military pressure. But have we the right, merely from the point of view of honor, to continue a fight which offers no prospect of success and will only cause our opponent to impose even harder terms on us later?

VON GALLWITZ: The question as to whether we can hold out permanently

or only for a time, is one that it is impossible to answer. He is of the opinion, however, that we could continue our resistance for quite a while, but can set no definite time. He does not believe that the enemy would later offer us severer terms as a result of an appeal to the nation and a continuation of the struggle; their opinion of us now was so low that they would demand everything. The first thing to do is to await the next reply; then it will be time to come to a decision. Then there will not be a moment to lose in issuing the final call to arms. He expects as a result a vital moral effect, an elevation of the popular spirit.

The government parties must now try to influence the soldiers to see that it is their duty now to go forth and sacrifice all. The troops should not go forth discontented. The power of the political leaders is so great that they could exercise a beneficial influence on the troops.

VON GALLWITZ replies to a question from Payer that it might be true that there are 2,300,000 Americans in France. But these are not all fighting men, but many of them are auxiliary troops, railroad troops, etc. There are now forty-two American divisions in France, each of twelve battalions above normal strength. The proportion is all the more unfavorable for us, as the strength of our divisions in numbers has been much weakened. One of the commanders in the Argonne has given our numbers compared to those of the enemy as 1:15. Even if this is too high, that of 1:6 would in any case be correct. But numbers alone do not count.

If Austria should throw all her roads open for the passage of troops, then, indeed, we would have to be prepared for the worst; but we ought to wait and see, first, whether Austria would so dishonor herself.

VON MANN stated that we could at any time resume the U-Boat war; as a matter of fact it has now entirely ceased. The Army on the western front will soon begin to feel the results. Up to the present time we have been sinking 33 car-loads every half hour. The stopping of the U-Boat war in the Mediterranean was a very painful necessity. If we were to begin fighting again, the U-Boat war would have to be resumed.

VON GALLWITZ: He is not in a position to reply to Friedberg's question concerning the strength of the Saloniki army by giving information in figures. They had not been in a position to undertake anything serious against us so long as the Bulgarians stood firm. Now they have become opponents worthy of consideration.

VON MUDRA: If Austria capitulates unconditionally and puts herself on the side of the enemy, our cause is lost. Following the catastrophe in Austria, preparations for the last stand must be made at once.

FRIEDBERG: If we carry on a struggle to the last man, there will be great danger that the Army will come back into the country in disorder. But we shall have to keep a portion of the Army intact for the protection of the interior.

VON GALLWITZ again states his view that first of all we must await Wilson's answer, in order to see whether he will stick to his present position, and then await developments in Austria. If Austria should become hostile, a new situation would be created.

At this point the two generals take their departure.

SOLF announces by way of addition that General von Gallwitz had told him on going that he had perhaps painted the defection of Austria in too dark a color, as he had forgotten for the moment that we still have several armies stationed in the east and the southeast. Consequently the situation does not look so black to him.

NO. 87

TELEGRAM

The Acting Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

COURT TRAIN, *October 30, 1918.*

The representative of General von Cramon has reported to His Majesty:

His Apostolic Majesty at an audience today directed me, as representative of General von Cramon, to inform Your Majesty how deeply His Apostolic Majesty regretted to have been compelled, by the hopeless condition of the Army on the southwest front and the fear of Bolshevik disturbances, to go his own way. I replied to His Apostolic Majesty that the mention of his determination in the note to the President has caused a very painful surprise. I furthermore felt obliged to point out to His Apostolic Majesty that an agreement to such conditions as Bulgaria had accepted would constitute a serious threat to our southern frontiers, and I most humbly begged that demands of that nature be refused.

GRÜNAU.

NO. 88

TELEGRAM

His Apostolic Majesty to His Majesty the German Emperor

October 30, 1918.

I was compelled early this morning to propose an armistice to the Italians, as the military situation has become untenable. But in case the Italians make the condition that the railroads through the Tyrol and Carinthia (the Tauer Railroad, the Brenner Railroad, the Southern Railroad) shall be opened for the transport of hostile troops against your terri-

tories, I will place myself at the head of my German-Austrians and prevent their passage by force of arms. You can depend firmly on that. The troops of other nationalities could not in that case be relied on.

In true friendship,

KARL.

NO. 89

TELEGRAM

To His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary

COURT TRAIN, *October 30, 1918.*

It was with emotion that I read your telegram concerning the offer of an armistice to Italy. I am convinced that your German-Austrians with your Imperial Majesty at their head would rise to a man against shameful conditions, and I thank you for having especially assured me of this.

In true friendship,

WILHELM.

NO. 90

TELEGRAM

VIENNA, *November 3, 1918.*

The German Ambassador at Vienna telegraphs to the Foreign Office:

The armistice conditions have been accepted by the Imperial Government. In so doing the Government expressed its hope that the Entente would not make use of Bohemia for its advance against the German Empire. This additional clause will scarcely make any impression on the Entente. As the terms have not yet been made public, the German-Austrian Government has not yet defined its attitude. So far as is known, the armistice terms provide for an evacuation as far as the Brenner Pass, the surrender of half of the artillery, demobilization down to twenty divisions, the occupation of all strategically important points, transfer of the railroads and the removal of the Imperial German troops within fifteen days.

WEDEL.

NO. 91

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY,
VIENNA, *November 3, 1918.*

By field courier.
Confidential.

Yesterday the German Councilor of State was called to Schönbrunn. Dr. Adler, Secretary of State, told me that the Emperor read the armistice conditions to the Councilor of State and then said in the course of a long speech that they were inconsistent with his honor and were unacceptable. But the speech ended with the declaration that they had, nevertheless, to be accepted. Purpose of the summons is said to have been to get the Councilor of State to acquiesce, in order to make him share the responsibility. But he took care not to fall into this trap.

The conditions constitute a pure capitulation and, he does not doubt for a moment, were drawn up so as to make it possible to attack Germany from this side. If we do not get an armistice, then the advance of the Entente will commence, with the active cooperation of the Hungarians, the Czechs and the Southern Slavs, while the German-Austrians, despite their indignation, will be helpless onlookers.

How we are to defend our borders in such a case is a matter for us to decide. His position would naturally be made easier if a contest on Austrian territory could be avoided.

WEDEL.

To His Highness, the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden.

NO. 92

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Chargé d'Affaires to the Foreign Office

Urgent.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October 31, 1918.*

Armistice¹ concluded today at 1 p.m. Shall wire conditions as soon as known.

WALDBURG.

¹ Armistice with Turkey.

NO. 93

TELEGRAM

His Excellency von Hintze to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *October 30, 1918.*

Extract

The Supreme Army Command communicates the following report of an agent from Berne on the twenty-fifth of this month:

At this moment there is taking place at French Headquarters a conference between Haig, Pershing and Foch concerning the armistice terms to be offered. Conference has not been concluded; up to now the following requirements of the Allies have been announced:

1. Strict refusal to deal with Ludendorff or other members of the Headquarters Staff. On the other hand, willingness to deal with a commission chosen by the Reichstag for this purpose.
2. Retreat of the German troops to the frontier.
3. Immediate occupation of the evacuated territory by the Allies.
4. All German war material to remain in the territory to be evacuated.
5. Evacuation of Alsace-Lorraine and occupation of the cities of Metz and Strassburg by the Allies.

HINTZE.

NO. 94

TELEGRAM

BERNE, *October 28, 1918.*

The German Minister at Berne telegraphs to the Foreign Office:

For the purpose of having it passed on to me, several members of the Federal Council have stated in conversation with members of the German War Prisoners' Commission that they no longer saw any possibility of the abdication of the Emperor being avoided. Without any doubt we shall very shortly be facing a brutal (*word mutilated*) of the Entente. The dynasty might yet be saved and the hopeless final struggle avoided, if we were to make the sacrifice ourselves of our own free will. The individuals referred to justify their advice above all on the danger of a revolution, which might also engulf their own country. They believe that if His Majesty the Emperor would sacrifice himself, and in a formal appeal commit his youthful grandson to the loyalty of his people and his Army, especially to that of Field Marshal von Hindenburg, he would thereby not only awaken warm sympathy abroad, but would also throttle the spirit of revolution in Germany.

ROMBERG.

BERLIN, *October 31, 1918.*

To (title) Hintze,
General Headquarters.

Minister at Berne telegraphs:

Representatives of the Swiss Government, with whom I talked today, do not understand how anyone can still be in doubt as to the meaning of the Wilson note. This was also expressly emphasized by a confidential agent, who informed me that all Americans of any importance here had stated that at last Berlin would probably take the hint. The dismissal of General Ludendorff has made an extremely unfavorable impression on everyone, inasmuch as they say the Emperor is dismissing his best men in order to save himself, and that he is capable of sending even Hindenburg away, thereby showing that he still hopes to preserve the old system, and that he does not seriously desire any democratization. For the time being it is useless to attempt to make America understand that the changes in our Constitution have definitely overthrown the old régime which in their eyes is embodied in the person of the Kaiser, owing to the agitation of which he is made the center. Only the elimination of this personality would have a convincing effect, and would indicate for the President a success that would once again put it in his power to oppose influentially (*mutilated*) the extreme chauvinistic influences in his own country and those of the Entente (*mutilated*). In any case, action must be taken with the greatest possible speed, as our last note gives the impression that we have spoken our last word, and are now awaiting the conditions which, according to the concluding paragraph of the Wilson note, can be no other than a demand for capitulation, if nothing else follows from our side. The interpretation above rests in part upon a conversation between . . . and the confidential agent, in which . . . replied to the opinion that the failure to bring about the abdication might be laid to a mistaken interpretation of the Wilson note, that in his official capacity he could not answer that, but that as a private individual he was forced to say that Wilson could not have expressed himself more plainly without being tactless. Furthermore, there was no question of any misunderstanding in Germany, as even the entire German press had correctly understood the note.

ROMBERG.

NO. 96

MEMORANDUM

BERLIN, *October 31, 1918.*

In none of the previous communications of President Wilson was the renunciation of the throne by the Emperor expressly demanded. Hints are contained in the following passages in his notes:

1. Note of October 14:¹

To avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, the President considers it further necessary to call the attention of the German Government in the most solemn manner to the language and the plain intent of one of the terms of peace, which the German Government has now accepted. It is contained in the address of the President at Mount Vernon on the 4th of July last, and reads: "The destruction of every arbitrary power that can separately and secretly disturb the peace of the world and if its destruction is not now possible, at least its reduction to virtual impotency." And the power which has hitherto controlled the German nation is of the sort here described. It is within the choice of the German nation to alter it. The President's words just quoted naturally constitute a condition precedent to peace, if peace is to come by the action of the German people themselves. The President feels bound to say that the whole process of peace will, in his judgment, depend upon the definiteness and the satisfactory character of the guaranties which can be given in this fundamental matter. It is indispensable that the Governments associated against Germany should know beyond peradventure with whom they are dealing.

2. It is expressed more plainly in the last paragraph of his note of October 23:

The President deems it his duty to say, without any attempt to soften that which sounds harsh, that the nations of the world do not and cannot place any confidence in the words of those who have hitherto been the masters of German policy.

3. At the end of the note he says:

If it (the American Government) must deal with the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany now, or if it is likely to have to deal with them later in regard to the international obligations of the German Empire, it must demand surrender instead of peace negotiations.

Up to this time it could not be unequivocally determined whether in these phrases the President was aiming only at the system and constitutional provisions, or whether he had distinct personalities in view. Attempts at elucidation were made and are still in progress, but have so far attained no definite result. In neutral countries the view predominates that he wishes

¹ The distinct variations herein from the wording of Wilson's notes as given in Nos. 48 and 76 are according to the German text.—TRANSLATOR.

actual abdication. This view is based on the interpretation of Wilson's messages, on impressions gained from conversations with representatives of America and the Entente, and especially on the following considerations:

Wilson himself wants a just peace on the basis of the points of his program. The Entente bitterly opposes the acceptance of this program. It wants to conclude peace on the basis of its own and very much more severe conditions. The Republican party in America under the leadership of Roosevelt likewise demands the unconditional subjection of Germany. Wilson, as politician, is all the more dependent on these currents because the elections for the American House of Representatives will take place on the 5th of November and the Democratic party, Wilson's party, has a majority of only a few votes. If this majority is lost, the execution of the President's peace program will be rendered difficult, if not impossible. For in spite of all his power and authority, the American President is in the end dependent on the opinion of the voters. Even if Wilson personally looks upon abdication as a demand only of secondary importance, he stands in need of this symbol, in order to prove to the Entente and the American public by a striking success that his war aim, the democratization of the world through the removal of the German military autocracy, has been attained. Constitutional amendments do not suffice for this purpose, as the American masses do not understand the German constitution, and, therefore, its amendments. The Emperor, on the other hand, is shown by a reading of the newspapers and the illustrated journals to be the personification of autocracy and militarism in the eyes of the American public. Therefore, the abdication of the Emperor as an undeniable result of Wilson's policy, would strengthen the latter's position and would probably make it possible for him to carry out his program despite all opposition. It is asserted that without this reinforcement of his position, Wilson will have to succumb to pressure and that severer peace terms in agreement with the views of the Entente will be imposed on Germany.

SOLF.

NO. 97

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

MUNICH, November 2, 1918.

Independent Social Democrats will hold a meeting here tomorrow at which the abdication of the Emperor will be demanded.

TREUTLER.

NO. 98

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Minister to the Foreign Office

Absolutely confidential.

BERNE, November 3, 1918.

Various confidential agents state independently of one another, that Wilson's decisive influence is much endangered, and that owing to the want of success in the matter of the Emperor's abdication, he will be forced to turn to the second alternative mentioned in his note, namely, unconditional surrender. A report to the effect that the abdication of the Emperor was demanded in vain in the Federal Council of Bavaria, and that the opinion prevails in authoritative circles in Bavaria that the Emperor is scheming to overthrow the new German Government at the first opportunity, has had a particularly injurious effect in Entente countries. It is even asserted that Bavarian deputies have given the Entente to understand that in certain circumstances Bavaria would withdraw from Imperial politics. From two different sources I learn that Bavaria's separatist leanings are taken seriously by the Entente. This fact appears to be correct, whether the report of the Bavarian emissaries, which sound somewhat fantastic, is fraudulent or not.

A trustworthy Italian friend informs me that there exists among the Italian Socialists a strong inclination toward cooperation with a really democratic German Government, but the Emperor personally is excluded.

ROMBERG.

NO. 99

TELEGRAM

The Acting Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

COURT TRAIN, November 5, 1918.

The Emperor just sent for me to explain more in detail his ideas concerning the continuation of the peace conferences, quite apart from the armistice negotiations.

After the occurrences in Turkey and Austria, it must be taken into consideration that the terms might be so extreme and so dishonoring that the Army would refuse to submit to them. This might result in the Army adopting a point of view at variance with that of the Government and the wishes of the people, who wanted peace. Possibly the creation of such a schism was the intention of the Entente, in order to weaken our political power of resistance at a critical moment. Such a schism would place both

the Emperor and the Government in the most difficult position. Therefore a preparing of the way for peace transactions independent of the negotiations for the armistice must be taken into consideration, and it must be made possible to continue them even if the negotiations for the armistice fall by the wayside.

The armistice would not lead directly to peace, but there might easily develop from the continuance of peace negotiations a state of affairs in which an armistice, or at least a suspension of hostilities, would be easier to arrive at than at present.

The opening of peace negotiations, for which we had laid the corner-stone by the adoption of the Wilson program, by the assent to evacuation, by the practical abolition of the U-Boat war and by internal political transformations, would render it easier for us to make a more determined stand with regard to the armistice conditions, if need be. For in case severe armistice conditions should be proposed, we should not without further ceremony be faced by the alternatives of accepting or breaking off negotiations with the probability of entering upon a final struggle.

So the business of fighting should proceed without changing its character, until the condition of the peace negotiations rendered the initiation of an armistice possible.

In order to separate the peace negotiations from the armistice negotiations, and to continue to spin the thread of peace, the Emperor put forward the suggestion that the armistice negotiations be conducted between the respective armies. The initiation of this method might be based on the fact that Wilson himself had designated the determination of the armistice terms as a matter for the military authorities. If we should adopt this suggestion and leave it ostensibly to the military men, we might be able to free the peace negotiations from a burden that did not belong to them, and thus further them, especially as it does not seem as if Wilson would carry his point with the Entente. Should the front be further consolidated, as it had been during the past few weeks; were the Entente successes to be delayed in consequence of the unfavorable season of the year, and if the peace negotiations should progress, then the influence of Wilson and of the elements of the Entente that are favorable to peace might be able to gain a greater consideration. His Majesty would be very much interested to learn the Government's opinion of this suggestion.

GRÜNAU.

NO. 100

SESSION OF THE SECRETARIES OF STATE ON THE 5TH OF
NOVEMBER, 1918*Extract*

Present:

The Imperial Chancellor, their Excellencies von Payer, Friedberg, General Gröner, Scheüch, Count Roedern, Drews, von Waldow, von Krause, von Mann, Haussmann, Bauer, Scheidemann, Solf, Erzberger, Groeber, Trimborn, Rüdlin, Göppert, Generals Hoffmann and von Winterfeld, Colonel von Haeften, Majors von dem Bussche, Brinckmann and von Harbou, Director Deutmoser, Privy Councilors Simons, Nadolny, Prince Hatzfeld, von Schlieben.

GRÖNER:¹ I have felt it to be urgently necessary for me to come here and inform you with regard to the situation as I see it. I consider it to be imperative that we work together in the very closest cooperation, and that we determine unanimously on and execute every decision at which we arrive for the benefit of the Fatherland.

I would like first to touch upon the external situation in general, and in a few words review it, because an understanding of our present situation must logically follow from such a review.

The political encirclement of the years of peace developed uninterruptedly into a military encirclement. From 1915 to 1917 we endeavored to break through the circle and push the ring back; in this we were partially successful in the east and southeast. We thus undoubtedly gained an appreciable economic strength to enable us to hold out, but, on the other hand, we were weakened from the military point of view by the extension of territory which it was beyond our power to maintain. In 1918 a new attempt was made to bring about a decision at the strongest segment of the circle, in the west. The attempt failed. At the same time the danger of the collapse of our allies closed in on us in the most threatening manner, even approaching to a degree and with a speed which was quite unexpected.

Thus our enemies were given free rein to move their encircling forces right up to the German borders. The determined and confident political warfare of our enemies under the dictatorial three-star constellation of Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George, leaves it to be expected that the military leaders will also strive for the most complete decision of the war—the surrounding and the capitulation of the German people. In this respect the military operations of our enemies find a powerful support in Bolshevism, which is penetrating our people and our armies from the east and the south-east.

¹ The following address by Gröner was read word for word.

If we continue to prosecute the war, we must take into our calculations the possibility that *not only the Roumanians may again take up the war, but that the Czechoslovaks and other elements of our former allies may also actively support the operations of our foes. They are already committed in the plainest manner to a passive support by the terms of the armistice.*

I need not again point out the great numerical superiority of the enemy, now that the German Army has been left to stand alone.

It is apparent that we should make a thorough concentration of our military forces, and draw in to the German border those details which are still on the outer circumference of the circle in the southeast and the east. Orders for this purpose have already been issued to all the troops in Hungary and Roumania. We hope to be able to get them away by rail; otherwise, they will have to fight their way through. The few troops and formations still in the Italian theater of war are already on their way back. How the troops in Asia Minor are going to be able to get out, it is as yet impossible to foresee.

It is of particular importance to determine whether it will be necessary to leave the troops in the east, including the Ukraine. Apart from political and economic reasons, it must be remembered that at the withdrawal of those troops Bolshevism will take possession of the evacuated territories and will press in upon our Fatherland. If we should be forced by our enemies to continue the war up to the point of our total overthrow, there would be nothing else to do but to draw in these troops also for the purpose of the immediate defense of our own borders.

To give up the east as a whole, immediately, for the purpose of strengthening the Army in the west does not seem necessary even for military reasons, apart from everything else. These troops could *not be transferred* to the west *soon*, on account of the transport conditions, especially in the Ukraine; the fighting capacity of these troops is not equal to the requirements in the west, and their intrinsic moral value has been shaken by influences on the eastern front. The infection of the still courageous troops of the western Army is to be feared. Before the introduction of these eastern troops on the western front, they must undergo a lengthy period of stern training.

It is for the political authorities to decide whether, for political and economic reasons, it would not be better to keep these troops in the east.

I now come to the individual theaters of the war.

Measures for the protection of the border have been taken on the frontier of the Empire facing the former Austro-Hungarian dominions. Since the Imperial Government gave permission for the occupation of the Tyrol, it will be possible to protect Bavaria from the favorable tactical positions in the mountains. Except for the Bavarian reserves, there are at present two divisions available for the Tyrol. The Alpine Corps is to be brought from Hungary. Frontier guard detachments are being organized on the Saxon

and Silesian frontiers. General Army Command No. VI, Army Corps, has been transferred to Görlitz.

Although, for purely military reasons, an advance of German troops into Bohemia is not advisable at present, it will, nevertheless, be a question of garrisoning certain points of the German border territory to safeguard the inhabitants against pillage and murder, and the Imperial Government should come to some decision as soon as possible. At the moment, so far as military exigencies are concerned, it would merely be a question of garrisoning railway junctions on the other side of the frontier.

The troops returning from Roumania and southern Hungary are for the present to be made use of on the new southern theater of war. Should the troops in the Ukraine be withdrawn, they, too, would be partially available for the protection of the southern frontier.

An advance of the enemy through Odessa and across the Ukraine and Poland against the eastern German frontier is less likely to occur for some considerable time.

The western front.—Our opinions on this subject are the result of a conference with the Supreme Army Command. There has been heavy fighting on the west front for months. While the English have made continued attempts to break through between Cambrai and St. Quentin, the French and the Americans have been pressing against our positions between the Suippes and the Meuse. At many points deep inroads were made in the line. As, owing to the lack of reserves, a successful stand did not appear possible, it was found necessary to draw back our front into a shorter line, better adapted to defense. As a result the Army Group of Crown Prince Rupprecht was gradually drawn back to the general line Ghent-Tournai-Valenciennes-Landrecies, and, to join up with it, the Army Group of the German Crown Prince behind the Oise-Seine-Aisne and Aire sectors. The enemy kept on pressing forward and renewed his attacks. While the English continued to push forward their main forces in the direction of Maubeuge for the purpose of breaking through, and repeated their attacks in Flanders with the aid of French and American troops, the main assault of the French and Americans was directed against the front between the Oise and the Serre, against the front on both sides of the Aisne west of Rethel, and against the front between Vouziers and the Meuse.

The difficulty of holding these positions for any length of time is above all due to the lack of reserves and reinforcements. At the end of October, the Entente had at its disposal on the western front over 96 reserve divisions as against fifty-eight German reserve divisions. This disproportion in numbers was *further altered to our disadvantage* by the necessity of sending troops to the German-Austrian frontiers, and by the withdrawal of the Austrian divisions on the western front. The average battalion strength of the French is about 600 men; of the English about 700; of the Americans about

1200; while with us it has dropped to an average of about 500 men. So it is necessary to put back into the line, often after but few days of rest and without sufficient reinforcements, divisions that have been withdrawn battle-worn and exhausted.

We shall have to count on the continuation of powerful attacks on the part of the enemy. For this reason it has several times been seriously considered whether the Army should not be withdrawn to a shorter line with a consequent saving of effectives—to a line running from Antwerp, west of Brussels, through Charleroi to the Meuse. But there were weighty arguments against such action. The political position demands that we should avoid any considerable loss of territory as long as possible. It would take several weeks to effect the complete evacuation of the territory to be given up, in which, but a few days ago, there were 80,000 wounded, as well as enormous stocks of war material and supplies. The difficulty of transport in the occupied territory is already intense and, by withdrawing the front, with the consequent loss of a close network of railways with numerous good stations of great working capacity, this difficulty would be so accentuated, that although it would appear possible to provide the supplies absolutely necessary for the troops in the new position, any possibility of rapid movements of troops behind the front would be entirely out of the question. Every step backward leads, moreover, to a curtailment of our economic resources and thus above all to the injury of our war industries.

Nevertheless, the Supreme Army Command can no longer put off the decision to retire further. *Its first duty is and will be, to avoid under all circumstances a decisive defeat of the Army.* If the enemy succeeds in breaking through, then this danger will exist, as the Supreme Army Command no longer has enough reserves available who are fit for fighting. If the northern half of the Army gradually swings back to the indicated line, we may hope that heavy battles may be avoided for the next fourteen days, and thus that a little time and rest may be gained for the exhausted troops. *But the military situation in general is not to be improved,* inasmuch as the position has not been wholly consolidated and as the railroad and the supply questions are getting materially worse. By withdrawing the front *it is not possible to avoid the further serious injury to a large part of Belgium.* Even if the devastation of the country is forbidden by commands of the strictest type, on military grounds certain necessary destructions and hardships for the population are not to be avoided.

Reports relative to the spirit of the Army give us to understand that certain divisions, despite long service at the front and heavy losses have fought wonderfully, while others, coming fresh into battle, have refused for no clearly obvious reasons. In any case, the armistice proposals and the cowardly and dissatisfied utterances of the press have had a depressing influence on the spirit of the troops. It is constantly being reported from all sides

that the men coming back from leave at home and the reinforcements being brought out of the east are having an unfavorable effect on morale. It must be noted too that the latter are often affected by the Bolshevistic spirit. Wherever it has been possible to maintain a high morale, it has been principally the work of individually strong and spirited officers. It is therefore of the utmost importance to do everything possible to bring the corps of officers to its former high level by training, education and proper leadership. But for this purpose it is necessary that at home, too, everything should be done to elevate the position and the importance of the officer to its former height, and to deal sharply with all inflammatory propaganda.

Conditions on the side of the enemy are unquestionably more favorable. On account of the greater number of reserves, they are in a position to afford longer periods of rest to their divisions. Up to the present they have been able, by putting in reinforcements, to compensate with comparative speed for the heavy losses which, according to the uniform reports from our troops, they have been sustaining. Nevertheless, there are increasing indications that their morale is getting worse, especially among the French, and that the infantry attacks of the enemy are no longer being carried out with the old force. Despite that fact, our weary infantry does not always withstand the weak attacks of the enemy infantry if they are supported by overpowering artillery fire and by numerous tanks.

On the whole, it must be said that the *military situation has become further accentuated*. If the Army is still unbeaten, this must be attributed to the spirit of bravery and devotion to duty that still rules in the body of the Army. The power of personality, whether of officer or man, stands out more and more in the fighting. Where in the hearts of the "field-grey" soldier still glows the sacred fire of national enthusiasm, there too is born the soul-stirring deed, and the onrush of the enemy is broken against the joyful determination of our brave men to give their lives for their country. How can this sacred fire be kept burning when ice-cold streams, enervating to the soldiers, are being poured out over the Army by the polemics of the press at home, by the men returning from home leave, and by returned prisoners from Russia who have again been put into the Army? What we demand from the nation is not criticism or polemics, but the strengthening and the steeling of heart and soul. If there is not a speedy change, the homeland will utterly destroy the Army. It is my duty to state that fact here. Likewise, the General Field Marshal has commanded me to state in so many words that, in connection with *the question of the abdication of the Emperor*, he should regard himself as a rascal if he should desert the Emperor, and so, gentlemen, do I and every other honorable soldier think. How can the thousands of thousands of brave officers and soldiers find strength for a death of sacrifice, when discord has been sown in their hearts and their consciences? What nobody at home seems to have any concep-

tion of, is the psychology of the Army, those imponderables upon which obedience depends. If the fanatical attacks on the Emperor do not cease, the fate of the Army is sealed; it will break in pieces. And the wild beast will break out in the bands of irregular soldiery pouring back into their native land.

The general conclusion of the General Field Marshal and of myself is this: The worst enemy against which the Army has to guard itself is Bolshevism and the danger of being unnerved by influences emanating from home.

Only for a brief period can that resistance last which the Army will be able to lend against the assault of our outside enemies in view of their tremendously superior numbers and the threat from the direction of Austria-Hungary. It is not possible to set a definite length to this resistance, as, on the one hand, it will depend on the attitude of the country, on the other, on the measures taken for the Army and on the moral and material condition of the Army. In the estimation of this factor self-deception is easy, for which reason I must refrain from expressing an opinion. It will be saving the German Empire from internal disintegration and dissolution, if the structure of the Army remains firm, if its desire for a common Fatherland is unweakened and its spirit held to obedience.

SCHEIDEMANN asks if the new enlistments for the strengthening of the fighting power of the Army would be of any importance.

GRÖNER: The newly enlisted men would be taken from industry only to a very small extent. Nor would they be placed at once among the fighting troops, but would be taken to recruit depots and put under training. Only when they had been put into good condition, would they be placed among the fighting troops. It is absolutely necessary to enlist these men, because we must be prepared for everything. He is not ignorant of the fact that the action will be the cause of unrest. To dispense with these reinforcements is, however, impossible, in view of present conditions.

ERZBERGER: According to his view, the points of General Gröner's address are as follows:

1. An improvement of the military situation is not to be expected.
2. A retirement to the frontier must be contemplated.
3. It is uncertain how long we can hold the frontier of the Empire or the line of the Meuse.

Could General Gröner assume the responsibility for further bloodshed if the situation could not be improved?

Gröner said he wished that Bolshevism could be put down. But numerous reports had it that the evil state of mind was being brought into the country from the front.

GRÖNER: The statements made under Points 1 and 2 were correct; as to the third point he could set no definite time, as the factors which would determine the length of the resistance could not be accurately estimated.

If the Army held to its discipline and the troops at the front retained their excellent spirit, we could maintain ourselves in rear positions for some time yet. It would all depend on what use the foe made of his chances for attack. He could set no fixed period for a possible resistance. But we could gain time thereby for the continuation of the negotiations. But it is for the people at home to say that the Army must hold out until the finish. That a bad state of mind is being imported from the front into the country itself is certainly possible, but in all probability the effect is reciprocal. If the Army remains unbroken, we should be offered better terms and have a better foundation for reconstruction when peace comes.

We should certainly be able to gain the time necessary for the negotiations. If we are lucky, the time might be longer, if we are unlucky, shorter; thus the negotiations must be arranged with a tactical view to this end. For that reason he is anxiously striving for the closest cooperation with the Government.

In answer to the question, as to what he would consider likely to be the shortest time we could hold out, supposing all the most unfavorable circumstances were to arise, General Gröner replies:

GRÖNER: A retiring operation on a large scale has been commenced. Up to the present moment it has succeeded well and fortunately. It would depend on whether the enemy could affect it materially, especially on whether at one particular and very important point all attacks could be consistently repelled. He is not in a position to answer the question unconditionally, and requests patience for a few days more, until the operation has been completed.

NO. 101

WILSON'S FOURTH NOTE¹

In my note of October 23, 1918, I advised you that the President had transmitted his correspondence with the German authorities² to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, if those Governments were disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as would fully protect the interests of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government had

¹ Official English text, showing deviations in the retranslation from the German.

² Retranslation: "exchange of notes" instead of "correspondence with the German authorities."

agreed, provided they deemed such an armistice possible from the military point of view.

The President is now in receipt of a memorandum of observations by the Allied Governments on this correspondence, which is as follows:

The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January,¹ 1918, and the principles of settlement² enunciated in his subsequent addresses. They must point out, however, that clause two relating to³ what is usually described as the freedom of the seas, is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept. They must, therefore, reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the peace conference.

Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his address to Congress of January 8, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed,⁴ the Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea and from the air.

I am instructed by the President to say that he is in agreement with the interpretation set forth in the last paragraph of the memorandum above quoted.⁵ I am further instructed by the President to request you to notify the German Government that Marshal Foch has been authorized by the Government of the United States and the Allied Governments to receive properly accredited representatives of the German Government, and to communicate to them the terms of an armistice.

ROBERT LANSING.

¹ Retranslation: January 8.

² The words "of settlement" do not appear in the German text.

³ The words "clause two relating to" do not appear in the German text.

⁴ The words "and freed" do not appear in the German text, and the following word "the" begins a new sentence.

⁵ The words "above quoted" do not appear in the German text.

CONCLUSION OF THE ARMISTICE—NOS. 102 TO 110

NO. 102

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Secretary of State (retired) to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *November 7, 1918.*

German Armistice Commission left Spa at twelve noon today in automobiles for the French lines. The Commission consists of:

Secretary of State Erzberger, *Chairman.*

Minister Count Oberndorff.

Major General von Winterfeld.

Naval Captain Vanselow.

A captain, an interpreter and two secretaries went with them.

General von Gündell withdrew.

A second section will go to the headquarters of the Army Group of the German Crown Prince at three o'clock this afternoon. This section includes:

Major Duesterberg, Major Brinckmann, Major Kriebel, Major von Bötticher and, at the request of Secretary of State Erzberger and Count Oberndorff, Councilor of Legation Baron von Lersner; also several cipher officers and a journalist.

VON HINTZE.

NO. 103

TELEGRAM

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *November 8, 1918.*

FOREIGN OFFICE, BERLIN:

Secretary of State Erzberger sends the following wireless:

It appears from the conference which took place under the presidency of Marshal Foch, only French military officers and English naval officers being present, that the armistice terms which have been presented have been concerted by the military authorities and Governments of all enemy countries and are binding, consequently Marshal Foch was obliged to refuse the respite (delay of twenty-four hours) which was urgently requested, and based on technical difficulties, and also, on the same grounds, refused the provisional suspension of hostilities which was asked for. So far as can be judged up to the present,

no counter proposals will be permitted so far as the main decisive points are concerned. An attempt will, nevertheless, be made in individual conversations which have already been arranged, to arrive at the modification of certain points, primarily for the maintenance of internal order and for the prevention of the threatened famine. For this purpose we shall attempt to acquire a prolongation of the respite and a decrease in the amount of material to be surrendered.

In case a refusal is not determined on, request express authorization to sign at once with whatever modifications in the matter of practical execution of the terms we may be able to attain here.

Furthermore, request authorization that, in case of acceptance, there may be added to the protocol a declaration somewhat in the following terms: "The German Government will, of course, make every effort to execute the obligations it has undertaken. The undersigned, however, deem it their conscientious duty in the interest of the honesty of the relations between Germany and her opponents, to point out at the present moment that the execution of these terms will plunge the German people into famine and anarchy, and that, therefore, there may arise a situation, without any fault of either the German Government or the German people, which may render impossible the further observation of all obligations."

Final decision as to the answer to be returned must be made by you, as must also the decision whether the preceding declaration should be added, even at the risk of upsetting the armistice negotiations. In view of the shortness of the respite, request that the final wording be left to the plenipotentiaries.

VON HINTZE.

NO. 104

TELEGRAM

The Imperial Counselor of Legation to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, November 8, 1918.

Secretary of State Erzberger has wirelessly that he has sent a courier to Spa with the armistice terms. Terms must be accepted or refused by Monday noon. Cessation of arms until then has been refused by the French. It is not quite certain whether the French have really given until Monday for the acceptance of the armistice terms, as a seventy-two hour respite is spoken of.

LERSNER.

NO. 105

TELEGRAM

His Excellency von Hintze to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *November 9, 1918.*

Following is an extract from the armistice terms, the complete text of which is not to be expected before tomorrow:

1. To go into effect six hours after being signed.
2. Immediate evacuation of Belgium, France, Alsace-Lorraine, within fourteen days.
- Troops remaining after this period will be interned or held as prisoners of war.
3. Surrender of 5,000 cannon, principally heavy guns; 30,000 machine guns, 3,000 trench mortars, 2,000 flying-machines.
4. Evacuation of the left bank of the Rhine; Mainz, Coblenz, Cologne to be occupied by the enemy for a radius of thirty kilometers.
5. A neutral zone thirty to forty kilometers in depth to be established on the right bank of the Rhine. Evacuation to take place in eleven days.
6. Nothing to be removed from the left bank of the Rhine; all factories, railroads, etc., to be left intact.
7. Surrender of 5,000 locomotives, 10,000 cars, 10,000 motor-trucks.
8. Support of the enemy troops of occupation by Germany.
9. In the east, all troops to be removed behind the Frontier which existed on August 1, 1914. Limit of time therefor not stated.
10. Annulment of the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest.
11. Unconditional capitulation of East Africa.
12. Return of the stock of the Belgian Bank, and of Russian and Roumanian gold.
13. Return of prisoners of war without reciprocity.
14. Surrender of 100 U-Boats, 8 light cruisers, 6 dreadnoughts; the other ships to be disarmed and guarded by the Allies in neutral or Allied harbors.
15. All forts and batteries in the Cattegat to be occupied by the Allies.
16. Blockade continues in existence. German vessels may still be seized.
17. All restrictions on neutral shipping imposed by Germany are to be removed.
18. Armistice to last thirty days.

Commission requests authorization to sign these conditions; hopes to force an extension of the respite. Commission has not concealed the fact that observation of the conditions is in part impossible, as famine in Germany will inevitably result and will make observation of all the conditions impossible.

VON HINTZE.

NO. 106

TELEGRAM

Received November 10, 1918.

The Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army telegraphs to the Foreign Office:

Following wireless in cipher from the German plenipotentiaries has just arrived here:

To the Supreme Army Command for the Imperial Chancellor:

Full authorization has just arrived. As soon as the armistice has been concluded, we recommend advising President Wilson of it by wireless and requesting him to institute negotiations to bring about a preliminary peace at once, in order to prevent anarchy and famine. We further request that it be arranged that through Holland's mediation a first meeting of the plenipotentiaries may take place at The Hague immediately. Only by an immediate conclusion of the preliminary peace can the disastrous effect of the execution of the armistice terms be mitigated.

Our opponents so far have shown no comprehension of this danger.

Erzberger.

CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE FIELD ARMY.

NO. 107TELEGRAM¹

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *November 10, 1918.*

TO THE MINISTRY OF WAR:

An attempt must be made to procure the modification of the following points in the armistice terms:

1. Extension of the date for evacuation to two months, the greater part of this time being needed for the evacuation of the Rhine Provinces, the Palatinate and Hesse, otherwise the Army will collapse, as the technical execution of the terms is absolutely impossible.

2. The right wing of the Army must be allowed to march through the corner of Maestricht.

3. Abandonment of neutral zones for reasons of internal order, at least must be restricted to a depth of ten kilometers.

4. Honorable capitulation of East Africa.

¹ This telegram was sent at the same time with the wireless message to the German Armistice Commission negotiating with Foch.

5. A considerable reduction must be effected in the railway material to be surrendered, otherwise industry will be seriously endangered. With regard to paragraph 7, only a small number of personnel can be left; more detailed arrangements required on this point.

6. Army only provided with 18,000 motor lorries, fifty per cent available for use; surrender of the number demanded would mean complete breakdown of Army supply system.

7. Only 1,700 pursuit bombing aeroplanes in existence.

8. If there is to be a one-sided surrender of prisoners of war, at least the present agreements as to treatment of the latter must remain in force.

9. The blockade must be raised so far as food supplies are concerned. Commissioners to deal with regulation of food supplies are on the way.

If it is impossible to gain these points, it would nevertheless be advisable to conclude the agreement. In case of the refusal of points 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 a fiery protest should be raised, and an appeal addressed to Wilson.

Please notify Government of outcome of these matters at earliest possible moment.

VON HINDENBURG.

NO. 108

TELEGRAM

BERLIN, *November 10, 1918.*

TO HINTZE, GENERAL HEADQUARTERS:

I beg Your Excellency to request the Supreme Army Command to send the following message by wireless to the Armistice Commission:

For Secretary of State Erzberger. You are authorized to sign the armistice. You will at the same time add the following declaration to the protocol:

The German Government will make every effort to execute the conditions imposed. The undersigned, however, conceive it to be their duty to call attention to the fact that the execution of certain points of these conditions will plunge the population of the unoccupied parts of Germany into the misery of starvation. The abandonment of all provisions in the territories to be evacuated—provisions which were destined to feed the Army—as well as the curtailment of the traffic facilities, which is equal to an abstraction, while the blockade is at the same time maintained, makes the nourishment of the nation and any organized distribution impossible.

The undersigned therefore request that they be allowed to negotiate on such alterations of these points as will ensure the question of nourishment.

I also agree that the Supreme Army Command be permitted, through His Excellency Erzberger, to effect the capitulation of East Africa in an honorable manner, and furthermore to arrange for the march of our troops through the corner of Maestricht.

IMPERIAL CHANCELOR.

NO. 109

BERLIN *November 10, 1918.*

TO SECRETARY OF STATE VON HINTZE (FOR THE SUPREME ARMY COMMAND):

The peace delegation is to be informed by wireless that the German Government accepts the armistice terms tendered it on November 8.

SOLF.

NO. 110

TELEGRAM

His Excellency von Hintze to the Foreign Office

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, *November 11, 1918.*

Armistice went into force today at 11.55 a.m.

VON HINTZE.

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